# Feeling at home?

## Middle class youth in Beirut and their sense of location

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract

This is a study on sense of location and relative location. It examines how a group of young middle-class adults in the Lebanese capital Beirut form a sense of their relative location in the world. The study is located in Beirut, a Mediterranean city with a distinct history of connections to places including Europe and the Arab world. The study focuses on how research participants are located through different regimes such as border bureaucracies and their own connections and disconnections to different places in the world, and how they make sense of their location through a process of social poetics. The study analyses how the participants use stereotyping in comparison of places to form a sense of their own location.

This study is a contribution to understanding youth in today's Middle East and to the anthropological examination of Beirut, Lebanon, and the Levant. It also contributes to the growing literature on anthropology of movement and transnationalism, discussed also under such names as globalization and cosmopolitanism.

The study is based on ethnographic fieldwork carried out in Beirut between August and December 2015. The study is based on participant observation and semi-structured interviews with a core group of middle class anglophone research participants. Participant observation and interviews were supplemented by media follow-up including both Lebanese traditional and social media, and attending academic events in Beirut. The research participants were all educated, between 20 and 35 years of age, and had experience of travel or life outside of Lebanon, but otherwise their life histories were divergent. There were a total of 14 core research participants (6 male, 8 female).

This thesis analyses relative location and sense of location utilizing multiple theoretical discussions, including anthropological discussions on location, social poetics, value, state, the affective turn, and cosmopolitanism. The analysis suggests that the research participants use stereotypes of places that serve as examples of values, in a process that serves to configure the participants' sense of location. It further suggests that encounters with state, political mobilization, and border bureaucracies serve as important nodes in forming one's sense of location.

The analysis also points out that encounters with borders and travel are affective experiences, and that therefore the formation of a sense of location is not only cognitive and conceptual, but also bodily and emotional process. Finally, this thesis suggests that the sense of location of the research participants is not a question of identity, and that even crossing borders does not necessarily imply shifts in identities of the research participants. The thesis concludes by claiming that while cosmopolitanism works as an emic political category in Beirut, it also has analytical weight in understanding how the research participants form as sense of their location in a complex situation where national borders are only one of many mechanisms at work.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords
Location, anthropology, Beirut, social poetics, middle class, stereotypes, cosmopolitanism

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract

Tämä on tutkielma sijainnin tunnusta ja suhteellisesta sijainnista. Tutkielmassa tarkastellaan kuinka joukko nuoria keskiluokkaisia aikuisia Libanonin pääkaupungissa Beirutissa muodostaa tunnun omasta sijainnistaan maailmassa. Tutkielma sijoittuu Välimeren rannalle Beirutiin, kaupunkiin jolla on erityinen asema ja yhteyksiä niin Eurooppaan kuin arabimaailmaan. Tutkielma keskittyy tarkastelemaan kuinka tutkimuksen osallistujat sijoitetaan erilaisten regiimien, kuten raja-hallintojen, ja heidän omien eri paikkoihin liittyvien yhteyksiensä ja katkoksiensa kautta, ja kuinka he muodostavat tunnun omasta sijainnistaan sosiaalisen poetiikan kautta. Tutkielma analysoi kuinka osallistujat käyttävät stereotypioita paikkojen vertaillussa muodostaessaan tunnun omasta sijainnistaan.

Tutkielma syventää ymmärrystämme nykypäivän Lähi-idän nuorisosta ja osallistuu Beirutin, Libanonin ja Levantin antropologiseen tarkasteluun. Tutkielma osallistuu myös kasvaviin antropologisiin keskusteluihin liikkeestä, transnationalismista, globalisaatiosta ja kosmopolitanismista.

Tutkielma perustuu etnografiselle kenttätyölle joka toteutettiin Beirutissa elokuusta joulukuulle 2016. Tutkielma perustuu osallistuvaan havainnointiin ja temaattisiin haastatteluihin, jotka toteutettiin keskiluokkaisista, englantia puhuvista nuorista aikuisista koostuneen osallistujaryhmän kanssa. Osallistuvaa havainnointia ja haastatteluita täydennettiin mediaseurannalla sekä perinteisessä että sosiaalisessa mediassa, sekä osallistumalla akateemisiin tapahtumiin Beirutissa. Tutkimusosallistujat olivat kaikki korkeakoulutettuja 20-35 vuotiaita nuoria aikuisia, joilla oli kokemusta elämästä tai matkustamisesta Libanonin ulkopuolella. Muuten tutkimusosallistujien elämäntarinat erosivat toisistaan. Tutkimukseen osallistui 14 ydinosallistujaa, joista 6 oli miehiä ja 8 naisia.

Tutkielma analysoi suhteellista sijaintia ja sijainnin tuntua käyttäen apunaan antropologisia ja teoreettisia keskusteluita sijainnista, sosiaalisesta poetiikasta, arvosta, valtiosta, affektiivisesta käänteestä ja kosmopolitanismista. Tutkielman analyysi osoittaa, että osallistujat käyttävät stereoetyyppejä paikoista, jotka toimivat esimerkkeinä arvoista, muodostaessaan tunnun omasta sijainnistaan. Analyysi osoittaa myös että kohtaamiset valtion, yhteiskunnallisen liikehdinnän ja rajabyrokratian kanssa ovat tärkeitä kiinnepisteitä osallistujien muodostaessa tunnun omasta sijainnistaan.

Tutkielman analyysi osoittaa myös, että kohtaamiset rajojen ja matkustamisen kanssa ovat affektiivisiä kokemuksia, ja että siten sijainnin tunnun muodostuminen ei ole vain kognitiivinen ja käsitteellinen, vaan myös kehollinen ja tunteellinen prosessi. Tutkielma osoittaa että osallistujien sijainnin tunnussa ei ole kysymys identiteetistä, eikä edes rajojen ylittäminen välttämättä merkitse muutoksia osallistujien identiteeteissä. Lopulta tutkielma esittää, että vaikka kosmopolitanismi on myös paikallinen poliittinen kategoria Beirutissa, on sillä myös analyyttista arvoa yrittäessämme ymmärtää kuinka osallistujat muodostavat tunnun omasta sijainnistaan moniulotteisessa tilanteessa, jossa kansalliset rajat ovat vain yksi monista vaikuttavista mekanismeista.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords
Sijainti, antropologia, Beirut, sosiaalinen poetiikka, keskiluokka, stereotyypit, kosmopolitanismi

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# 1. Introduction

Throughout history, the stories unfolding on different shores of the Mediterranean sea have always been closely entangled. Sometimes its shores have been connected under Imperial state structures, from Rome to the Ottoman Empire while at other moments they have been disconnected through political, ideological and material boundaries. Today both these disconnections and connections are ongoing fast reorganization, with the European Union erecting new legal and material barriers to disconnect itself from the South and East of the sea, but at the same time seeking to connect to them through initiatives such as the European Neighborhood Policy. At the same time, movements of people and things continue to connect and disconnect different sides of the sea, with refugees fleeing conflict in Syria and Libya to look for safety in the North, and European expatriates, companies and aid-agencies flocking to the South and East to work their business. Among the countless objects crossing the sea in different directions there are food, weapons, popular culture, oil, tourism, policy initiatives and stories of joy and sorrow.

In this thesis I propose one certain perspective for looking at these connections and disconnections. I look at one specific place on the Eastern Mediterranean, the Lebanese capital Beirut, and base my examination on participant observation with a handful of young Beiruti middle-class adults who have experience of the world beyond Beirut, but are now living in the city. I suggest looking at the connections and disconnections my research participants have to different places, and how they are located and how they located themselves. I propose that using the concept *relative location* can offer new insights to how people live their everyday lives and how they plan their futures. This means that instead of focusing *who* people are and how they identify themselves and others to examine *where* they are in relation to other places.

The aim of this thesis is to examine how relative location might work. How is it that people come to have a sense of their location in the world? What issues and processes might be involved in connecting them to some places and disconnecting them from others? I hope that the discussion in this thesis can for its part help shed light on these questions and provide new directions on understanding the human condition in today's world, where paradoxically borders are both gaining and losing in importance.

## 1.1 Research questions and perspective of the study

The Lebanese society has long been spread over the world with a long history of migration, diaspora, and cross border movement. In a way, I believe that the research project I undertake in this thesis could be carried out with pretty much any group of human beings, yet due to its unique characteristics Beirut and Lebanon provide an interesting example for a study in relative location. Often rhetorically located between "Europe and the Arab world", the city has strong historical connections to many different corners of the world even beyond the Mediterranean occident-orient divide. Furthermore, although not explicitly a hotbed of anthropological interest, Beirut has strong local institutions of higher education and a tradition in high quality anthropology and sociology.

Since the end of the Lebanese Civil War in 1990 and related to the massive urban reconstruction, Beirut has been a focal point for point scholars interested in urban reconstruction and change, and for scholars interested in issues of memory politics and conflict resolution. Even though my own research does not follow any specific strain of research focusing on Beirut, I feel that this intellectual milieu connected to the unique features of the city and the whole of Lebanon provided a exceptional context for studying how today's young adults make sense of their location in the world.

My main research question is *"How do young middle class Beiruti adults form a sense of their relative location in the world?"*. The whole thesis is meant as an answer and explication of this question. Subsidiary questions that help me shape my answer to to main question are "How are stereotypes used in comparison of places by my research participants to form their sense of location?" and "What other processes are involved in locating my research participants?". I answer these questions based on analysis of my discussions with my research participants in Beirut and my participant observation in their daily life.

Studying *relative location* is not a well established discussion inside anthropology, but I suggest that it can provide fresh insights to the discipline long engaged with discussions of globalization, transationalism, migration, movement, and space. Studying relative location means studying the changing relations between people and places, counting in both connections and disconnections (Green 2012b). My central concept *sense of location* implies that relative location is not only

something that can be analytically fixed from the perspective of the researcher, but is an intimate part of the daily lives of people and societies. I argue that my research participants come to a sense of their location through a dual process. First, they encounter regimes that *locate* them, that organize relations between their current place and other places. In this context I examine my informants encounters with border bureaucracies and state structures. Second, they make a *sense* of their own location through understanding and organizing their relations to different places. I argue that an important part of this is what Michel Herzfeld has called *social poetics* [Herzfeld (2005), and thus look at how my participants use *stereotypes* in organizing their location in relation to different places. Thus I spend a large part of this thesis examining how my research participants describe and compare Lebanon, the Persian Gulf countries and Europe.

My argument in this thesis, grounded on my research, works to diminish the importance of both *nationalism* and *identity* for the understanding of how my research participants make sense of their own location. I acknowledge that in other contexts they can serve as central nodes organizing the relations between people and places. However, I would like to suggest that the importance of nationalism and identity need not be an *a priori* supposition, but that their relevance should be worked out through ethnographic research. I intend this work for its part to show that they are not analytical *necessities*, and that a lot that goes on in our world can be understood without referring to them.

Finally, although besides my main argument, I hope that this text provides a contribution to the anthropological examination of Beirut and Lebanese youth. It must be clear for all European or Levantine readers that understanding the new generations on all sides of the Mediterranean is not only an interesting academic discussion, but also a highly pressing social concern. With the European border machinery working to categorize tentative travelers into wanted and unwanted, it's worthwhile to give the stage to people figuring out their futures in the context of these machinations. Although my research participants are middle-class Lebanese, not Syrian[1], and thus not tentative boat migrants or asylum seekers, I believe it is still worthwhile to listen these people

[1] I'm referring here to the Syrian civil uprising that began in 2011 and has since turned into a protracted civil war, sending Syria's civilian population to seek for shelter in neighboring countries. During the war, and especially in year 2015, Europe has as well seen an influx of Syrian refugees, many of whom have been forced to cross the European border clandestinely by European border policies. While some Lebanese are also looking at possibilities for clandestine entry to Europe, the phenomena is not on the same level as with Syrian refugees.

now living in the beautiful and troubled city that Beirut is.

**The structure of the thesis:**

In the next three subchapters I describe, respectively, my field, my research participants and my methodology, and finally some reflections on limitations of the study and the ethical concerns involved. In chapter 2 I present and explain my central theoretical concepts of relative location and sense of location, and provide two short biographies of my research participants. Chapters 3-6 are my main discussion chapters, where I examine my ethnographic data together with theoretical discussions. I do not present a separate 'theory chapter', and all theoretical considerations are discussed in relevant locations in the discussion chapters. In chapter 3 I move to examining my ethnographic data on description and comparison of places, while discussing theories of stereotypes, social poetics, and value. Chapter 4 starts with how my participants imagined their futures, and continues through a discussion of anthropological theories of state to a case study of political engagement. Chapter 5 is dedicated to discussing my research participants engagement with border bureaucracies and affiliated documents, connected to a discussion of affect in social theory. In chapter 6 I look at the discussion around the concept of 'cosmopolitanism' both in Beirut and in the social sciences and relate them to the perspective of my research participants. In chapter 7 I provide concluding remarks and present answers to my research questions.

## 1.2 Field

I carried out the research for this work in the capital of Lebanon, Beirut, during the Fall 2015, between August and December. When I arrived in Beirut in the beginning of August 2015 the city was under a heatwave somewhat stronger than is normal for the summers of Beirut. The temperature that remained consistently close to 40 degrees Celsius for my first month in the field made getting well acquainted with the city somewhat difficult. Even a 15-20 minute walk from my apartment in the neighborhood of Sodeco to the office of the Finnish Institute in the Middle East in the neighborhood of Badaro was almost overwhelming. Then, the contrast with the flimsy but effective air-conditioning in our office pushing the indoors temperature down to 20 degrees or below did not make life any easier.

However, as the Autumn progressed and the sand-storms passed, the city became more and more

accessible by foot, and I started getting to know my surroundings. Beirut, a city of many names and more histories, is in many ways as complex for outsiders as for its inhabitants. There are an estimated 2 million residents in the Beirut region. Although no one really knows, since no official census has taken place since the 1930's, and in any case the Syrian civil war has sent at least hundreds of thousands of Syrians to seek safety or a better future in the city. It is home to practically all major ethnic and religious groups in the Levant, from Arab Sunnis to Orthodox Christians, from Kurds to Armenians to the Druze.[2] A city once nicknamed "Paris of the Middle-East", a city that suffered through the ravages of a 15-year civil war and now struggles to balance its feet in the turbulent political context of today's Middle-East.

When starting to explore the city, the very location of my accommodation proved illustrative to me. My place was located in the neighborhood of Sodeco, on the infamous 'Damascus street', originally built to facilitate trade between the Port of Beirut and Damascus. During the civil war of 1975-1990, I learned, Damascus Street, stretching from the sea in the north towards the inland south-east, served to divide East Beirut under control of right-wing Christian militias and the West Beirut under control of leftist, Palestinian and Islamist militias.[3] The demarcation line was called "the Green Line", the name coming from the vegetation that took over the unused street surrounded by buildings abandoned by their inhabitants. Across the street from my window was the old Jewish cemetery of Beirut, a trace of a once vibrant Jewish community, parts of which remained in the city until the Israeli invasion of 1983.

Now, in some ways Damascus Street in Sodeco still continued to mark a spatial divide, cemented by the civil war, between the fancy majority Christian neighborhood of Ashrafiyeh and the working class Muslim neighborhood of Ras al-Naba'a. If I walked from my apartment east, to Ashrafiyeh, within the first 500 meters I could count a number of French patisseries, upscale cof-

[2]The importance given to the plurality of sects in the Lebanese political culture has been and is contested by a whole variety of political movements and groups, and it should be noted that many Lebanese consider that sect should be a private matter and not important in terms of statecraft.

[3]Althought the war ended more than 25 years ago, its effects are still more than visible in the everyday life of Beirut. One banal example would be that taxi-drivers would often refuse to drive or ask for extra charge for driving to neighborhoods across the Green Line, even if it made no sense in terms of physical distance. For a history of the immensely complex Lebanese civil war, see Theodor Hanf's *Coexistence Wartime Lebanon* (Hanf 2015). For one example of the issues of memory and amnesia connected to the war, see Sawalha Aseel's article on Lebanese cinema and the war (Sawalha 2014). For how the war strengthened sectarianism in Lebanon, see e.g. (Khalaf 2012 pp.42-44).

fee shops serving lattes, several bars, and one night club serving to a ultra-rich clientele. If I took the opposite direction, I would enter streets brandishing symbols of the Shi'a military-political movement Hezbollah, lined with small shops selling basic groceries and other necessities. A good example of the class distinction between the neighborhoods could be a barbershop price index. If I headed east, the first barbershop would offer to cut my hair for a minimum of 30 USD, if I headed west the deal would be around 5 USD.

In the grand socio-geographical sense Beirut is usually broadly divided into at least three main regions. East Beirut, comprising of the central district of Ashrafiyeh and areas to east and south from it, has a Christian majority and has a traditionally strong French cultural influence. Parts of East Beirut mentioned in this work include the Ashrafiyeh neighborhoods Gemmayze and Mar Mikhael. Beirut's southern suburbs, usually called Dahiye (actually, Arabic for 'suburb'), comprise mostly Shi'a Muslim majority working-class neighborhoods. But the historically important and densely populated Palestinian refugee camps of Bourj al-Barajneh and Shatila, home today also to scores of Syrian refugees and Asian migrant workers, are also located in Beirut's south, as well as some relatively middle-class Christian neighborhoods.

Finally, West Beirut, located around the central district of Hamra, has a traditionally mercantile middle-class to upper-class Sunni Muslim constituency, but consists of diverse neighborhoods from Sunni working class areas to the Hamra street dotted by institutions of scores of different Christian denominations, but that has also been called the bastion of liberalism and secularism in Beirut. Downtown Beirut (or, central business district), discussed at some length in this work, lies between East and West Beirut. This historic center of Beirut, which was destroyed largely in the civil war, has seen a massive reconstruction process that remains incomplete.

I do not explore all areas of Beirut in this work. Rather, my fieldwork was spatially quite limited. I carried out all the interviews in the general area of the Ashrafiyeh district, and most of the participant observation I engaged in happened either in Ashrafiyeh or in the Hamra district. The choice was mostly guided by my interest in studying middle-class urban youth. Especially important for my work were the Ashrafiyeh neighborhoods of Gemmayze and Mar Mikhael, which housed the currently greatest concentration of pubs and bars in Beirut. Especially the area of Mar Mikhael was quoted as a favorite location for spending their free-time by a majority of my research participants. With a barely two-lane central street lined by beautiful architecture from

the late 19th to early 20th century, the neighborhood was rapidly gentrifying. During my time in Beirut the street was practically lined with trendy pubs, that also stretched out to the small side-streets. While cozy and rather relaxed during afternoons or Sundays, during weekend nights the half a kilometer stretch filled up with festive crowds from all over Beirut, drawn in by the trendy atmosphere, yet generally approachable (for the middle-class, that is) prices offered by the area.

Although I have decided to restrict my treatment of Lebanese history in this text due to concerns of brevity (and since it has been better presented elsewhere), the unique Lebanese history of emigration and diaspora requires a few words. The region forming the state of Lebanon today has seen significant emigration to many corners of the world since at the very least the 19th century, and significant diaspora populations are found today especially in Europe, North America, South America and Africa.[4] During the civil war emigration increased yet further. The importance of Lebanese diaspora and also that of returned migrants has been so significant, that in 2007 Lebanese sociologist Guita Hourani noted that in every fifth member of the Lebanese parliament at the time had a background of migration (Hourani 2007 p.11). Thus, in a way, the community my research participants belonged to was not restricted by the borders of the state of Lebanon, since practically every Lebanese family has some ties to the diaspora, and even the Lebanese considers the diaspora to be an integral part of Lebanon (Hourani 2007 p.1).

## 1.3 Data and participants

I carried out my research relying mostly on participant observation and a series of semi-structured interviews. Since during my fieldwork period I was working with the Finnish Institute in the Middle East, I spent most of my working days at the office of the institute, and thus had to limit doing my ethnographic observation and carrying out the interviews mostly to evenings and weekends. While the arrangement with the Institute made carrying out the field period financially possible, it doubtlessly was also a liability in terms of limiting the amount of time I had on hand, especially for participant observation.

[4]The definitive collection on the Lebanese diaspora communities is *The Lebanese in the World* edited by Albert Hourani and Nadim Shehadi (Hourani and Shehadi 1992). With more than 30 contributors and 700 pages, the volume goes to a great length in mapping the the spatial and temporal depth of the Lebanese diaspora. For a more recent and focused treatment, Dalia Abdelhady's *The Lebanese Diaspora* provides an ethnographic account of Lebanese first generation migrants in Montreal, New York and Paris (Abdelhady 2011).

When setting out to the field, I had a plan and an idea of studying how young adults from relatively well off backgrounds saw Europe and its borders from outside these borders. However, when in the field, I realized that the way my research participants were discussing about their experiences of Europe suggested that there was more at play. It got me thinking about how they saw their own position in the world. In this perspective, their experience of Europe's borders was only one part of a more complex story. Thus I drifted towards thinking about connections and disconnections, and reforged my research process accordingly. Most significantly this involved realigning the themes of my semi-structured interviews and more casual discussions towards comparison of different places and explanation of relations between them, instead of just focusing on the issue of experiences with the European border regime.

My participant observation consisted mostly of spending my time with people from a core group of research participants with things they would normally do during their free time. Thus, a lot of the occasions for time with my research participants were evenings and weekends spent in the nightlife of Beirut, road-trips to the countryside, house parties, and just walking around the streets of the city. Occasionally I would also join some of my participants, who worked outside of an office, at a cafe where everyone worked on their laptops with their own projects. Some more out-of-the-ordinary events were, for example, when I joined my research participants in demonstrations organized by the social movements that shocked Beirut during the fall calling for more accountable governance and an end to the sectarian political system.

In addition to engaging with my core research participants, I also joined a number of academic workshops and seminars discussing current issues in Beirut, organized for example by the famous Carnegie Middle East Center. Furthermore, following Beirut based English language media and blogs was part of my daily routine before, during, and after my field period. In addition to blogs and online newspapers, I spent time following discussions on social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, both in English and Arabic, and thus paying attention to social circles beyond my core research participants.

I gathered participants for my study by utilizing the traditional snowballing and random sampling techniques. Practically, I asked around all my contacts in the city for people who would fill some qualifications: a) That they are adults under 35 years old, b) that they have fluent English and c) that they have spent some time outside of Lebanon. Initially I had some problems with gaining

access to enough participants, but during the end of my stay the situation had reversed, and I found it difficult to find enough time to hang out with or interview all possible participants. The core group of research participants I regularly spent time with consisted of between 5 and 10 people, depending how I delimit the group. I carried out semi-structured interviews with all of these people, in addition to some others. I should note that even though I utilized snowball sampling, I had several snowballs moving, and thus not all of my participants were from same social network or were aware of each other.

It is also worthwhile to note that all of my research participants held remarkably similar core political views on the Lebanese society. None of them were affiliated with any of the established political parties, and all of them took a generally negative view of the sectarian political system in Lebanon. Obviously they had differing evaluations of different political groupings, some were more openly politically leftist, while others did not identify themselves politically. When in the field, I was originally surprised by this uniformity of opposition to all major political parties among my participants, since after all the political parties do have strong constituencies in the Lebanese society, and for example have a strong presence in the universities.

Had I snowballed my participants only from a certain group of friends and peers this would have been more expectable. Since I did not rely on a single snowball, I suspect this result is a combination of chance and the fact that support for the parties involved in the political status quo has eroded especially among the youth. The municipal elections after my field period in May 2016 somewhat fit this picture, since a non-sectarian 'citizens list' *Beirut Madinati* (Beirut is my City), that many of my participants expressed support for, gathered almost half of the votes in the city, in the context of a low general turnout and obscure election law, against a united list of all the institutionalized political parties (Syndrome 2016).

The interviews were recorded in a variety of locations, most often at one or another upscale coffee-shop, but occasionally at a participants home, or at a bar. For the interviews, I had memorized a set of themes that I used as a structure for the discussion, and I kept adjusting the list based on what I learned from my research as it carried on. I didn't keep to the themes too strictly, so if a participant showed more interest in some theme or another, I refocused the discussion accordingly.

Most of the interviews were carried out with a single participant, however I recorded one inter-

view with two and one with three participants. The interviews were all between 45 minutes and 1,5 hours of length. In total I recorded 11 interviews, with a total of 14 participants. Of these participants, 6 identified as male, 8 identified as female, 10 were between age 20 and 25, 3 between 25 and 30, and 1 between 30 and 35. All of these participants identified as Lebanese, and had spent some time working, traveling or living outside of Lebanon. Two of them, although Lebanese, were actually born outside of Lebanon, and had moved to the country for studies. All of these participants were either studying for a university degree, or had completed one.

A couple of my male research participants identified as homosexuals. I have not examined issues around sexuality or sexual identity in this thesis, although I maintain that a more thorough examination of the topics would have benefited a deeper understanding of my subject. Most of my participants held negative perspectives of the homophobia all too common in Lebanese society. This critical perspective was not rare among Beirut's educated urban youth. The social circles in which I carried out my participant observation included people of different sexual preferences, but they were not part of a gay social scene, or other such subculture organized around sexual identity or preference.[5]

The majority of my research participants were either from fully Christian families, or had one of their parents hail from a Christian background and another from a Muslim family. Although some of the participants identified as Christian, most of them actively downplayed the role of religion in their lives. Sectarianism has traditionally been at the core of scholarship on Lebanon, and some might suggest that my data is representative of 'Lebanese Christians'.[6] I would suggest that equally or even more important is that my participants are urban, educated and middle-class. These tendencies mean that my data and analysis are not representative of everyone in Beirut. However, my aim is obviously not to provide a statistically significant sample of Beiruti youth, but rather to examine discussions and social processes present in the lives of my research participants.

All the interviews and most of the discussion during participant observation were carried out in English. Although Arabic is the only official language of Lebanon, almost all young people in

[5] On the matter of queer sexuality in Beirut I strongly recommend Sofian Merabet's ethnography *Queer Beirut*, a beautiful introduction not only to Beirut's queer undercurrents, but to the city at large (Merabet 2014).

[6] Lebanese Christians, especially Maronites who form the majority, have traditionally leaned politically towards Europe and especially France. See e.g. Kais Firro's *Inventing Lebanon* (Firro 2003).

Beirut with a higher education are fluent in at least English and Arabic. Furthermore, the position of French in Lebanon is very important, not least due to the colonial history the countries share. Thus, although there were exceptions, most of my participants were more or less fluent in all of the three major languages spoken in Beirut: Arabic, English and French. It is worth noting that Lebanon has a distinct vernacular Arabic, closely related to other Arabic dialects of the Levant, but generally has a higher amount of borrowed words especially from French.

Even though I specifically queried for anglophone participants for my research, based on participant observation reaching to the social circles of my participants, fluent English was definitely widespread. I should note that personally I understand only the most rudimentary level of written French, and hardly none spoken. Furthermore, I have a basic level of standard and Lebanese Arabic that helped me a lot during my research. Even though my participants usually addressed me in English, it meant that I was usually able to comprehend them when they sometimes addressed each other in Arabic. Although carrying out the research in Arabic or French would no doubt have yielded different perspectives, I would like to claim that relying on English was a manageable liability, and rather provided a certain perspective on the topics at hand. The complex relations between French, English and Arabic and their hierarchical yet tangled relative positions in Beirut would merit a study of its own, and despite the importance and appeal of the subject I will not discuss it at length.

When speaking to me in English, my research participants often mixed words from Lebanese Arabic or French in their sentences. When speaking between each other, they often changed from one language to another quickly, even mid-sentence, depending on context and the issue discussed. In this text, when quoting my participants, I have slightly edited the transcription for the sake of easier reading. When some Arabic or French expressions were used in English sentences, I have preserved these to retain the unique flavor of English spoken in Beirut. In writing out the Arabic expressions I have used an extremely simplified transcription in presenting them. Nonetheless, the expressions should be clear and understandable for any reader familiar with a basic level of Arabic.

## 1.4 Self-reflection, limitations of the study, and ethics

It is clear that due to the amount and the quality of data I managed to gather during my stay in Beirut, the results presented in this thesis remain tentative. Even though I maintain that the overall argument in this thesis is soundly based on my data, I expect that many of the details and perspectives presented in this work would differ greatly had a different group of participants been chosen for the study. In a city socially as complex as Beirut, where intersections of class, gender, religious background, education, age, sexuality, and political affiliation mean vastly different experiences of the city and the world at large, it is clear that my description presents only one possible perspective. Important is also the fact that I chose to focus on participants who had first hand experience of life outside Lebanon. I have made these choices of focus knowingly to provide me a certain perspective on the themes I describe in this work, and acknowledge that a different focus would have yielded divergent results.

In this work I have followed the code of ethics set by the American Anthropological Association as my guideline for ethical concerns. During my research, I verbally discussed my research project and explicitly asked for consent with all of my research participants before engaging in interviews or participant observation with them. No forms were used. With those of my participants with whom I spent more time in terms of participant observation, I periodically brought up the fact that I am using our experiences as material for my thesis. Since all of my participants had completed a degree or were studying in a university, they were well aware of what a Master's thesis is, and I could be at ease that they understood what consenting to be a research participant involved. I have restrained from directly describing people from whom I could not get a verbal consent, for example in social situations involving multiple people where bringing up my research would not have been appropriate.

There were moments when I felt unclear of what would be the ethical approach to take, especially in situations of participant observation involving alcohol or partying. I have generally taken the conservative road and refrained from describing events or situations where I could not be certain that my participant would consent to its incorporation to this work. Therefore, occasionally there where discussions and situations that have definitely informed my general understanding of Beirut, but that I have refrained from discussing explicitly in the context of this work.

I have used pseudonyms for all my research participants and avoided sharing any personal information whereby it would be possible to identify them, unless it was by explicit consent from them. Due to the social importance of names in Beirut, with French names generally associated with people of Christian background (although the reality is more complex), I have taken it into account. Thus 'French' pseudonyms have been given to people who had 'French' names and 'Arab' pseudonyms given to people with 'Arab' names. To be clear, it would not be possible for a Beiruti reader to always guess the religious background of all of my research participants from the names used in this work, but the names still provide an important context.

# 2. Relative location and some introductions

In this chapter I will present my central theoretical concepts, relative location and a sense of location, and introduce the stories of two of my research participants to give a solid background for what will be discussed in the chapters to come. In the first part, I discuss the concept of space, and how it is related to location, especially through two writers. On space, I pay attention to Doreen Massey (Massey 2005), while on location I focus on the writings of Sarah Green (e.g. Green 2012a). In the second part, I present the histories of two of my research participants, Hassan and Sarah. I hope these introductions, theoretical and ethnographic, help the reader to contextualize my argument presented from chapter 3 onwards.

## 2.1 Location

As we know by now, the concepts of location, relative location, and a sense of location play a central role to my argument. In this chapter I will explain these concepts and provide an intellectual background for them. The concept of space has in many ways been central to social sciences, at the very least since Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (Lefebvre [1974] 1991). However, the related concept of location, which is at the center of my argument, has not seen such widespread circulation. The reason why I prefer location to space in the context of this work is largely that I'm interested in looking at relations between places and people. I consider location to be about where something or someplace is in relation to something or someplace else, while space is about what or how someplace is. In my discussion of location I rely entirely on the work of anthropologist Sarah Green (Green 2010; Green 2012c; Green 2012a; Green 2012b; Green 2012d; Green 2013).

But before moving on to examine Green's intellectual project and the concept of location, let me take a step back and discuss space. In her book (or rather, a manifesto) *For Space*, the late Marxist geographer Doreen Massey sets forth some propositions for a reconceptualization of space (Massey 2005). It is beyond my text to evaluate the full significance of Massey's seminal work, but I will try to explain here some notions from her project that bear immediate significance to my own work. In her book Massey makes basically three suggestions that somehow sound obvious,

but still carry heavy implications: that space is the product of relations, that space is plural, and that space is always under construction (Massey 2005 p.9). So, let us begin understanding these notions by quoting Massey:

> Not only history, but also space is open. In this open interactional space there are always connections yet to be made, juxtapositions yet to flower into interaction (or not, for not all potential connections have to be established), relations which may or may not be accomplished. Here, then, space is indeed a product of relations (the first proposition) and for that to be so there must be multiplicity (second proposition). However, these are not the relations of a coherent, closed system within which, as they say, everything is (already) related to everything else. (Massey 2005 p.11)

So, in Massey's understanding space is always relational. It is built by potential connections, some of which have connected, some of which perhaps will, and some might never. Thus for Massey, connections are central, but it is not only actual connections that deserve attention, but also potential ones. Even though Massey does not state so, I would suggest that researching space requires paying attention not only to connections and potential connections, but also to the significance of disconnections.[7] The second proposition, space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity, means that there is no master-narrative to space. If space harbors multiplicity, it should be understood as meaning that space is not identical; that there can be multiple spaces within a space. So for research, it implies looking at how can these different spaces coexist in the same space, forge new connections and disconnections and thus (possible) new spaces. As Massey claims, the proposition of relationality already presupposes this, as does the suggestion of multiplicity presuppose relationality. But let me quote more of her:

> Space can never be that completed simultaneity in which all interconnections have been established, and in which everywhere is already linked with everywhere else. A space, then, which is neither a container for always-already constituted identities nor a complete closure of holism. This is a space of loose ends and missing links. For the future to be open, space must be too. (Massey 2005, 11–12)

[7] On the significance of studying disconnections for a relational approach, see especially the work of Marilyn Strathern (e.g Strathern 2005).

So space can never be completed, it is always-already under construction. As simple and self-evident as this sounds, it still is worthwhile to point out. Researching something under construction requires drawing attention to the process of construction, the work related, the means of production involved.

These propositions of Doreen Massey form a background against which I can move to examine the work of Sarah Green and the concept of location. Working within the framework of border studies, Green has been putting some of the ideas of Massey to work on understanding borders. Explicitly, in her article *A Sense of Border: Stories so Far* Green borrows Massey's notion of space as the location of stories so far (Massey 2005 p.12; Green 2012a p.6) that implicitly involves Massey's propositions discussed above. Using tools proposed by Massey, Green has been arguing for us to research borders not only as sites where borders are crossed, classifications formed and differences connected or kept apart, but also to focus on the borders themselves as borders (Green 2013 p.348).[8]

Ever since taking up the metaphor of location in her *Notes from the Balkans* (Green 2005), Green has been pushing the metaphor of location in a number of contexts, from research with borders in Greece (Green 2010; Green 2012d) to the location of Europe in the discipline of anthropology (Green 2012c) to the theory of borders (Green 2012a) and the relative location of anthropology as a discipline (Green 2012b).

In her text on the Aegean she takes up the concept of 'border-ness', the meaning, purpose and quality of borders: *"In other words, as the concepts that inform the quality of 'border-ness' change, then so will the way in which borders classify, define and categorise people, places and things, and that will logically also affect the relations between them."* (Green 2010 p.262). So she is suggesting that borders include a classificatory logic, or epistemology, that is at work affecting relations between people, places and things. But she continues discussing how borders, while their own location is being revised, also revise connections, relations, disconnections and separations in multiple spheres from people's memories to theories and places:

[8]Obviously Green has not been alone in working this change of focus. The field of anthropological border studies has traveled far from its origins in the 70's South Tyrol (Cole and Wolf [1973] 1999) through borderland studies in the US-Mexico border (Alvarez 1995) and a focus on identities and nations (eg. Wilson and Donnan 1998) through Green and others to the more recent focus on border work (eg. Chalfin 2010; Reeves 2014; Andersson 2014).

> The differences that borders make as their location and meaning undergo revision usually also help towards making new, and remaking old, similarities and differences, because today's performance of border exists in the company of past performances of border that linger, not only in people's memories, activities and understandings, but also in theories, places and things. That generates connections and relations as well as disconnections and separations, across space and time. (Green 2010 p.264)

In the 2012 *A sense of border* Green continues to discuss border, but turns her attention to 'the sense of border': *"In sum: the aim here has not been to establish what borders are, but rather how different senses of border (borderness) have been the subject of ongoing ontological projects, those of empires as well as people going about their everyday lives"* (Green 2012a p.25). Talking of sense of border is obviously important for me, after all I'm claiming to discuss my research participants sense of location. The claim that a sense of border is a subject of ongoing ontological projects both on the level of empire as on the level of everyday life is of equal importance.

However, in 2012 she also takes up the concept of relative location to discuss the discipline of anthropology. In it she diverges for a moment from borders, and proposes a general understanding of the concept of relative location:

> Most particularly, I have been working on what I have called 'relative location', which refers to two things. First, it refers to the idea that the meaning of a place depends upon its relations with, and separations from, other places. … And second, relative location refers to the idea that the value of a place depends on what is often an hierarchically ordered position relative to other places — and it follows, of course, that this value also depends upon the particular value system that is used to create an order. (Green 2012b p.6)

We should pay attention to the development through these three texts, first border-ness as meaning or value of borders, then borderness and a sense of border, then finally relative location as grounded on a relative value of a place in hierarchical position relative to other places. Finally,

Green continues to suggest a project of understanding multiplicity in terms of relative location, returning to the border, but emphasizing looking at how there is conflict between the multiplicity of logics/epistemologies at work in making the relative location of a place come about:

> An analysis of the engagement between different, co-existing, attempts at imposing an order or logic on the world in terms of polity borders, and the kinds of entanglements that creates between them, is where my own work is heading at the moment. (Green 2012b p.7)

So through this discussion we have come around to a tentative understanding of my two connected basic spatial concepts: sense of location and relative location. These concepts imply that we can study what a sense (or thus, meaning, value) of location is for someone (or someplace), and the notion that this location is essentially relative, not absolute, and as such bound to change. Or as Green put it, a change in focus of research to the *shifts in the ground underneath everyone's feet* (Green 2013 p.349). Even though my text utilizes the conceptual tools proposed by Green, my work does not carry out the project suggested by her. While she is suggesting to start from the concept of location, and working to understand how borders or other such 'attempts at imposing an order or logic on the world' effect change in relative location of places, I instead start from the immediate experience(s) of my research participants.[9]

Thus, utilizing the conceptual framework proposed by Green, I instead look at how my research participants build up a sense of their own location based on the stereotypes and their values and experiences. My approach to this issue is a sort of a theoretical *bricolage*. In the coming chapters I leap through disparate theoretical discussions, such as anthropological discussions on social poetics and stereotype (chapter 3.1), value (3.4), state (4.2) the affective turn (5.1) and cosmopolitanism (6.). Using the concept of relative location as an anchor, I try to understand the formation of a sense of relative location for my research participants in the crosscurrents of different external 'attempts at imposing an order or logic on the world' and their own pursuit of making sense of it all.

[9]Some of Green's work is unidirectional with my work. Especially in her 2012 article *Reciting the Future* (Green 2012d) she starts from the stereotypical recitations of her research participants and tries to understand how such recitations work to locate them politically, socially, and in relation to the Turkish-Greek border.

## 2.2. Two short histories

Before moving on, let me introduce two of my research participants for the sake of context. The two descriptions chosen here are not meant to be representative of everyone who participated in my research, but are rather meant to give the reader an idea about the complex life stories and overlapping circumstances where my research participants live out their lives in Beirut.

When we met, Hassan was a 23 year old young man, having completed his bachelor's studies some years ago in French Literature at the most prestigious French university in Lebanon, the Universite de Saint Joseph (USJ)[10]. He had started his Master's studies, but quit them after a year. He was working in a bookstore earning some 800$ a month, in the heart of the Christian majority district of Ashrafieh, the same neighborhood he was also living in. What set Hassan apart from the rest of my informants was the fact that he was not completely fluent in Arabic, and thus preferred to communicate with his peers in French and English. He noted he was really embarrassed at his lack of fluent Arabic, and noted that to really really settle in Beirut it would be necessary; he claimed having studied Arabic, but never sufficiently mastered it.

Although Lebanese, Hassan actually wasn't born in Lebanon. His family had left Lebanon and moved to Africa before the time of his grandparents. Before his birth, his parents had moved from elsewhere to the city of Abidjan in Cote d'Ivoire, where Hassan was born and lived his life until he turned 17. He recalls his life in Abidjan as boring, with not much to do, and noted that in Beirut there are so many more possibilities to pursue one's goals in life. Having finished school, he finally traveled to Lebanon for his university studies.

First he claimed to me that he had to choose between studying in France or Lebanon, but chose Lebanon since he was more curious about living in his ancestral country. Later though, he acknowledged to me that actually the choice was his mother's: she preferred for young Hassan to go study in a country where they still had family, so unless he wished to contradict her, he really didn't have a choice. During his studies his family supported him financially, especially with the help of his mothers brother, that made it financially possible.

[10] Founded in the 19th century by French Jesuits, USJ is generally considered the third most prestigious institute of higher education in Lebanon, after the English language American University of Beirut. Albeit officially secular, most of it's students are from Christian and francophone background.

His father was a businessman in the traditional Lebanese mercantile style; Hassan claimed that his father had a constant habit of establishing new businesses, but had now settled for a stable job in a big company. His mother came from a Christian family, while his father was Muslim. Personally he didn't put much importance on religion. He told me he had some family in Lebanon; the closest of them being two aunts, with one of them living in Beirut and the other in the countryside. Hassan had a French nationality, which he got from his mother's family. His mother's father had given up his Lebanese nationality at a time when it was still easy for the Lebanese to get a French one. None of their family had ever lived in France.

When we met, Hassan had been living in Beirut for 6 years. He recounted that the first year or so was really difficult for him to get settled in Beirut. He was living in a University dormitory, not really able to make friends. Eventually though, things got easier and he got better settled down, until the point that now he was considering himself fully Beiruti. Although, during my research period, Hassan was intensively planning on leaving the country. He had plans of moving to Lyon in France, although it was unclear when and how his plan would materialize.

Another one of my research participants, Sarah, had also graduated from a Bachelor's program in the Universite de Saint Joseph, in Political Science. When we met, she was 20 years old, and she had just returned from a 3 month long internship in Brussels, where she had worked with a NGO based in the city, focusing on fields such as nuclear disarmament, climate politics and Israel-Palestine conflict.

She was Beiruti born, as were her parents. She noted that her grandparents moved to Beirut, when they were young. Yet, as probably most residents of Beirut, she was still officially registered in her family's home town in the countryside. She told me that she was from a Christian family, her father from southern Lebanon, and her mother from the countryside close to Beirut. She noted that her parents had university degrees, and that they had decent jobs. Her parents were paying for her studies in the USJ, and she told me that she felt a bit bad that they had to work really hard to pay her fees. She compared the fees at the USJ to those at the American University of Beirut, and told that since the fees in the more prestigious university were triple or even more, compared to USJ, it wouldn't have been possible for her parents to cover her studies there.

She told me that she was bilingual, that Arabic and French were her primary languages, and after them a fluent English and a basic level of Spanish. Even though she described English as her

third language, she spoke it as fluently as most anglophone Beirutis.

She is a Lebanese citizen, and has no other passport save the Lebanese one. She noted to me, however, that she had been traveling to France a lot since she was 15 years old. She told me she 'had done all of France', but not traveled in other countries, except for Spain.

She noted that before university, she had gone to the French secular Lycé located next to the French embassy. The school had French teachers, and students in addition to Lebanese, from around the francophone world, like from countries in Africa, from francophone Canada, and from France. She noted that amongst the students there were especially Lebanese students from the diaspora.

She noted that having studied in the French lycé helped her with getting a visa to France. When we met, she had a 4 year visa still valid for several years, and noted that it had made things easier for arranging the internship. For future, she had plans of beginning her Master's studies next year, in September 2016. She will likely do them in Europe, her preferred location being Paris. Finally, she told me that she feels one should travel while still young, and mentioned that she eventually thinks that after perhaps 10 years she would prefer to settle down in Beirut.

# 3. Attaching to places and evaluating them

In this chapter I will start examining my ethnographic data, and piecing together an argument on how my research participants form a sense of their relative location in the world, based on their experiences and encounters with places in Lebanon and beyond. In the first subchapter I look at Michael Herzfeld's notion of social poetics and his work on stereotypes to ground my ethnographic discussion (Herzfeld 2005). In the second subchapter, I will introduce the local concepts of *wasta* (clientelism) and *fowda* (chaos) that I argue are the most important concepts my research participants use in comparing their current location in Beirut with their experiences and stereotypes of Europe. In the third subchapter I introduce a triad of terms: family, money, and culture. I use these terms as shorthands for stereotypical pictures of Lebanon, the Gulf, and Europe, respectively, and argue that the stereotypes represent some important values that guide how my research participants form a sense of their location. In the final subchapter, I look at anthropological theories of value and connect them to the discussion of stereotypes and pull together my argument based on the more ethnographic subchapters above.

## 3.1 Stereotypes

Now, some readers might note that the way my research participants contrast Lebanon, Europe and the Gulf in what will be said below is entirely stereotypical. This is true, and exactly the point. My intent here is that essentialism and stereotypes are an integral part of how my research participants make sense of their location in the world. Obviously, this is not true only of my research participants, but I would claim it is a more general process. In some ways, discussions of stereotypes were central to the whole re-evaluation of anthropology since the 70's, especially with its decolonizing concept pair of orientalism and occidentalism (Said 1979; Carrier 1992).

However, a lot of this writing has circled around issues of anthropological stereotyping and essentializing, and not so much on stereotypes as an important social dynamic in itself. Stereotypes has, however, been taken up in a powerful way by Michael Herzfeld, especially in his book *Cultural Intimacy* (Herzfeld 2005)[11]. Herzfeld is mostly interested in nationalism, identities, and

[11] Readers familiar with Herzfeld's work might remember that his argument includes the notion of *cultural inti-*

national identities, and thus a lot of his writing pushes in a direction divergent from my own. His refined argument circulates around the concept of social poetics, during which he discusses self-stereotypes.

Herzfeld defines social poetics simply as the analysis of essentialism in everyday life (Herzfeld 2005 p.32). He notes that we shouldn't mistake concern for 'poetics' with the romantic mysticism of seeing poetry in social life, and that it's not about 'poetry' but 'poetics', not about the mystical semiosis of a genre, but the *"technical analysis of its properties as these appear in all kinds of kinds of symbolic expressions, including casual talk."* (Herzfeld 2005 p.23). In this text I follow Herzfeld's suggestion, and try to perform an analysis of essentialism in everyday life, including casual talk of my research participants.

For example, in dialogue with Anderson's Imagined Communities (Anderson [1983] 2006), Herzfeld suggests that national stereotypes are part of a social poetics that links everyday lived realities to 'grand dramas of official pomp and historiography to break down illusions of scale' (Herzfeld 2005 p.26). But let me quote him directly:

> One of the most common social poetic concerns is the use of stereotype in social interaction. Most anthropological discussions of stereotypes have addressed them from the perspective of group boundaries and mutual hostility. But these approaches are liable to the charge of static binarism unless they are contextualized as social action. Who uses stereotypes? Under what circumstances? How stable are the forms of stereotypes and the meanings people attribute to them? Racial stereotypes offer a particularly good illustration of how use can appear to convert transient perceptions into self-evidence. (Herzfeld 2005)

So while Herzfeld writes of state, nation, and identity, his questions and general framework do provide me tools to understand stereotypes as my research participants utilize them. While Herzfeld rejects the notion that stereotypes are about group boundaries and mutual hostility, and

*macy*, the "*recognition of those aspects of a cultural identity that are considered a source of external embarrassment but that nevertheless provide insiders with their assurance of common sociality*" (Herzfeld 2005 p.3). While I believe that a methodical application of the concept to the Lebanese context could yield interesting results, I acknowledge fact that such examination is beyond the scope of this text. Instead, I focus on essentializing in a way somewhat different from Herzfeld.

rather looks at stereotypes as a kind of social poetics informing national relations, the way we will see my research participants using stereotypes below is quite different. As we will see, participants provide stereotypical understandings of Beirut, Lebanon and the Gulf, but it will emerge that while these stereotypes have probably something to do with group boundaries, they necessarily do not relate to any kind of mutual hostility, nor are they in any sense primarily a national issue. Participants do not use stereotypes to forge a *Lebanese* or *Beiruti* identity, but rather to form a sense of their relative location in respect to different places. Thus, even the stereotypes are not actually so much about different groups as they are about different places.

Furthermore, for Herzfeld, stereotypes are always-already in the context of a hierarchical power structure. Thus, as he puts it, *"The act of stereotyping is by definition reductive, and, as such, it always marks the absence of some presumably desirable property in its object. It is therefore a discursive weapon of power."* (Herzfeld 2005 p.202) and *"This arbitrariness is the crux of the matter. In it are conflated the arbitrary – that is, capricious – use of power with the dissociation of the utterance from material reality."*(Herzfeld 2005 p.208)[12]. My material however does not allow for only such a reading of stereotypes. As we will see, sometimes stereotyping marks, instead of absence, the presence of some 'presumably desirable property in its object'. To put plainly, this means that in my treatment stereotypes are not always 'negative'[13], and they can instead sometimes be 'positive' essentialisms, presenting properties worth striving for. I should also note that my usage of stereotype differs from Herzfeld in that he is focusing mainly on stereotypes of collective identities, while I suggest that stereotypes can also be about place or location.

The understanding of stereotypes suggested here is meant to ground my discussion in the rest of this chapter. In 3.2. below, the proposed understanding of chaos and clientelism can be seen as forming for their part a stereotypical view of Lebanon as compared with Europe, that is in turn stereotypically associated with organization. In 3.3. I discuss how my research participants compare Lebanon, the Gulf countries and Europe by utilizing stereotypes I have termed family,

[12] This latter quote taken is out of context from an anecdote on how a bureaucrat uses a self-stereotypes of bureaucrats as arbitrary as a tool of resistance, but in my reading it applies to Herzfeld's understanding of stereotypes at large.

[13] Although Herzfeld defines stereotypes as 'negative', in his work they are actually rather ambiguous and a necessary part of everyday social reality, a perspective consistent with my own usage of the term.

money and culture. Finally in 3.4 I suggest how these stereotypes work as examples of values, and how they thus work as part of a social poetics whereby my research participants form a sense of their location.

## 3.2 Wasta and fowda

In this subchapter I will look at a two central notions in how my research participants understood Lebanon, and how they used these notions to provide a comparison with Europe. There were a couple of things that came up in the interviews over and over again. One of these things was what is called in Lebanese Arabic as *wasta*, meaning clientelism, preferential treatment or corruption. Essentially it means that in order to get things done, you really need to have the correct connections. As Ghassan told me during our interview:

> It's everything, this is the cultural thing, what I hate. I always feel injustice, there's no feeling of justice, it's not what you do, it's who you know… I hate it, it's really horrible. If it was hidden and no one saw it, it would still be bad, but now that it's in your face and on the open it's so terrible.

Following Ghassan's judgment my research participants constantly took up and defined *wasta* with both a decisively negative implication and with a clear and intense connection to what Beirut is about. When hanging out with Tony and some friends in the trendy night-life district of Mar Mikhael I mentioned the concept during our discussion and the crowd got greatly excited, shouting on top of each other their perspectives on how *wasta* affects their daily lives and life in Beirut in general. Clearly the concept has great leverage in the self-understandings of Beirut's residents.

Although *wasta* in Lebanon has received some scholarly attention, it has by no means been a topical hot-spot amongst anglophone scholars. In a fairly recent article, a group of Economics professors surprisingly provide a review of some literature touching on the issue of *wasta*, and furthermore provide us with a good working explanation of the concept:

> One is said to "have wasta" when those from whom one can request assistance are in positions of power that make it possible for them to grant the requested assistance. Those who have wasta can jump the queue in acquiring public services while

> those who do not will struggle through the "normal" bureaucratic process. (Barnett, Yandle, and Naufal 2013)

Furthermore they explain how the "economics of *wasta*" is seen by many as an inherently negative phenomenon.

> Wasta can be viewed as a source of nepotism, cronyism and corruption generally. It can be seen, especially by those who do not have wasta, as a means to gain what seems an undeserved advantage or as a mechanism that yields decisions based on connections instead of merit as perceived by the one who is left out in the cold. (Barnett, Yandle, and Naufal 2013)

As we have seen above, this judgment was essentially shared by my research participants in Beirut, for whom the prevalence of a "culture of *wasta*" was a major reason for not wishing to bestow emotional commitment to their home city.

There is also some sources focusing on *wasta* especially in Lebanon. One of the early sources is an ethnography by Frederick Huxley from 1978 named "Wasita in a Lebanese Context" (Huxley 1978). In his book Huxley reviews some earlier ethnographic work on *wasta* in Lebanon and joins them in defining *wasta* as especially a process involving a mediator between two interested parties, working to establish hierarchical or mutual relationships, especially between family groups. However our economists assert that in more recent days the role of a mediator has diminished and *wasta* is utilized more for private gain instead of larger social groups (Barnett, Yandle, and Naufal 2013 p.43)

Obviously Huxley's ethnographic context, a pre-war rural village of a cross-sectarian population of less than 3000 people where lineage and family played a more significant role differs widely from my highly educated urban dwellers of the local metropolis. A recent and rare addition to the literature on *wasta* focusing on Beirut is offered by sociologists Martyn Egan and Paul Tabar, who engage to analyze *wasta* in relation to the Lebanese state in a Bourdieuan framework (Egan and Tabar 2016).[14]

[14]For other (developmentalist and economist) treatments of wasta, see (Cunningham and Sarayrah 1994) and (Makhoul and Harrison 2004).

I should note that there does exist an anthropological discussion on patronage and clientelism that is intimately connected to the phenomenon of *wasta* in Lebanon, concentrating, but not limited to, the Mediterranean area. However this discussion is not very active of late, and I will not delve into this literature too deeply in this thesis. While some of the classics in this discussion talk of areas beyond my focus (Boissevain 1974; Campbell 1964; Peristiany and Pitt-Rivers 1992), others provide more insight into how the development of patron/client relations is entangled with the general societal change in Lebanon (Khalaf 1977; Khalaf and Denoeux 1988; Johnson 1977; Firro 2003). The whole edited volume *Patrons and Clients in The Mediterranean* (Gellner and Waterbury 1977) is of relevance. As of late, Sarah Green provides an evaluation overview of the general Mediterranean literature (Green 2008 pp.263-266); meanwhile Michael Gilsenan has written a thorough ethnographic account of clientelism in 1970's Akkar, one of Lebanon's more peripheral districts (Gilsenan 1996).

Being aware of social issues outside of Lebanon, my research participants recognized that clientelism or favoritism are not unique to Lebanon. As Ghassan claims in the quote above, a particularly unsettling aspect of *wasta* for most of my research participants was the fact that in Beirut it is hardly concealed, but rather at least partially out in the open and acknowledged by everyone, even if official discourse[15] might still deny its centrality. Although Clara, one of my research participants bent on building a life based in Beirut, claimed that from her experience corruption or *wasta* was worse off in France, and that in any case its prevalence in Lebanon was a colonial legacy from the French mandate and Ottoman imperial times.

So I will claim that even though the form of clientelism and favoritism named in Lebanese colloquial as *wasta* has indeed evolved from an area specific form of conflict mediation and social exchange, it is undoubtedly true that the way colonial powers utilized it has had an effect on its current shape and form, and in any case similar practices can be found all over the globe. What is important here in terms of my argument however is the fact that my research participants identify *wasta* as an important social concept that is connected to their discursive contrast of Europe and Lebanon.

[15] Although proper discourse analysis is far from what I'm engaging in with this text, let it be noted that in using the term "discourse" I follow Foucaults *"practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak"* (Foucault [1969] 2002).

Another important concept coming up in the interviews over and over again was the concept of chaos, or *fowda* in the local Lebanese Arabic. My research participants discussing in English would use the term chaotic or chaos, but when asked if they meant what was referred to in Lebanese as *fowda* they readily agreed. Thus Zeina claimed that *"In Brussels they have a system, here in Lebanon we have total chaos"*, contrasting organization in Europe with chaos in Beirut.

In her recent monograph on Beirut Kristin V. Monroe takes a detailed look at the role of *fowda* in Beiruti society especially through traffic and driving (Monroe 2016). As was evident from my own experiences, she recounts how the discourse of chaos is most evident in the local discussions on the Beiruti traffic. As she notices, the traffic, albeit chaotic, is not really unique in terms of the Arab world or the world at large. What is anthropologically interesting is the discourse of chaos in commenting on the traffic, where the notion of *fowda* extends beyond traffic to become a popular sociological concept commenting on issues such as development or even national identity. Or to let Monroe say it her way: *"as I listened further, I realized that the discourse about chaos itself, rather than its practice, was especially significant. Amid these narratives of the chaos of driving in Beirut were understandings of critical issues in Lebanese social and political life, past and present."*(Monroe 2016 p.102)

The binary opposition (perhaps partly as emanations of a colonial past), between Lebanon as chaotic and Europe as organized is nicely visible from Monroe's example of a French driving school in Beirut. The schools curricula was neatly divided in two: lessons on French driving theory, and then the practical lessons of driving in Beirut. As Monroe noted during her sessions of driving around with the teachers and students, *"the point most strongly emphasized by the teacher was to drive defensively at all times and to expect the unexpected"* (Monroe 2016 p.109). Thus a neat theoretically coherent system for Europe, expecting the unexpected for Lebanon.

Further, according to Monroe's study, the chaos has both positive and negative connotations. On the negative side, it is often connected to developmentalist ideas. As one of her informants noted, *"A country is not powerful because of how rich it is; its resources are its people, its organization… This is Lebanon's problem!"* (Monroe 2016 p.110), thus claiming a lack of organization to be Lebanon's main lack compared to more developed countries. On the other hand, chaos was connected to a popular (perhaps even nationalistic) self-understanding, such as when another one of Monroe's informants claimed that the Lebanese complain about chaos, but

actually like it, or when another informant, coming back to Beirut from France, was described by his peers as *nizami* (orderly/law-abiding), having lost something of his Lebaneseness. (Monroe 2016 p.113)

I should also note that even though Monroe's treatment of *fowda* is focused on issues of traffic, she does note that Beirutis utilize the concept also in *"their descriptions of other dimensions of civic, political, and everyday life"* (Monroe 2016 p.115) One of my closest friends and most perceptive research participants Michel was ready to follow this line in asserting chaos as a definite feature in his evaluation of Beirut, asserting that chaos is repeated on multiple different levels of society. Thus he claimed that in terms of architecture and urban planning chaos reigns in Beirut, but that even the language in Lebanon is a "complete chaos".

The notion of chaotic language of course rests on the fact that compared to neighboring dialects of Arabic the Lebanese dialect derives significant parts of its vocabulary from non-Arabic languages, historically especially French and Turkish, and lately also from English. Furthermore, especially amongst the upper and middle classes in Beirut there are tendencies of mixing phrases or words from French or/and English to the spoken Arabic dialect. To add to this, people will readily switch between English, French and Lebanese Arabic according to whim, social situation, or discussed topic. Thus for example once while we were driving to a party north of Beirut with Ghassan, Michel wanted to tell him a joke and addressed me in English: *"Sam, I'm sorry but I have to tell this joke in French"*, then proceeded to tell Ghassan the lead-up of the joke in Lebanese Arabic and changing eventually to French for the punchline.

Thus Michel's partially joking remark that even the language spoken by his circles in Beirut was chaotic, as many other aspects of social life around them. Unlike some other participants, Michel didn't evaluate Beirut's *fowda* purely in negative terms. During a discussion comparing Prague, where he spent time as one of the first Lebanese Erasmus students[16] he claimed (also referring to our earlier discussion on Lebanese political system) that one of the reasons he so liked Prague was that *"In Prague you have the chaotic part and the human rights respected part."* Thus for Michel Prague reminded him of things familiar from Beirut in terms of general

[16] A new development, the EU funded exchange program Erasmus was extended to offer possibilities for Lebanese students to study in Europe starting from 2014. My research participants were among the first generations to utilize this possibility. See (Erasmus+ 2016).

atmosphere, a clearly positive evaluation, while differing in terms of human rights, meaning that while comparing the political and social prospects in his preferred corner of Europe, he clearly saw Lebanon in comparatively negative terms.

This description of European places as organized as opposed to chaos in Lebanon was followed by Ghassan describing why he strongly enjoyed Paris during his time working there as an intern:

> Its more organized, its more chill, people are not angry and they are not impolite, it felt like everything is a bit more professional in a way. It's tiny things, but the ambiance, the general flow of life. You don't feel the tension that at least I feel here.

So in Ghassan's words, the first among a number of attributes contrasting Paris to Beirut is that things are more organized. As a matter of fact he started his discussion by recollecting how he arrived in Paris via airplane and got on a train from Charles De Gaulle to the city. This was the first time ever he used a train, and for him the train epitomized a more organized society, something Beirut had lost since the times of the French mandate.[17] When I noted to him that historically Lebanon had trains, and Beirut even had a working tram during the mandate period, he laughed off and noted that according to what he read and heard, even the tram was really disorganized, not running on schedule and with young men hanging out the doors collecting payments reminiscent of the minibuses currently doing the grunt work of public transportation around the city.

There's one more thing to be said on *fowda* and *wasta*. Monroe puts this neatly when she names one of her subchapters as *"The Chaos of Corruption"* (Monroe 2016 p.116). And although she doesn't use the term *wasta* in this chapter but rather returns to it later in her book in a different context, and although corruption is not exactly a great translation of *wasta*, I would be inclined to claim that according to my observations the discourse of corruption (the vernacular Lebanese being *fasaad*) and clientelism (*wasta*) are so intimately connected, that it would not be overextending to claim that for Monroe's ethnography as well as mine, the chaos and clientelism are as

[17] Lebanon saw a train run from the port of Beirut to Damascus first in 1895, while traffic stopped largely with the outbreak of civic strife in 1975 and Israel finishing off whatever remained of the infrastructure during its invasion of 1982. Now only rusting tracks and empty stations remain, though for example Beirut's Mar Mikhael railway station has been gentrified in to a nice nightlife spot. The fact that post-war reconstruction hasn't been able to restore even a piece of this rail infrastructure once an important stop on the railway from Paris to Cairo (!!) serves as a potent symbol for Beirutis feeling of a lack of *organization*, as noted above. See e.g. this piece of journalism (Varzi 2015).

well deeply connected. And their connection is formed through the third nominator in this essentially developmentalist discourse, *organization*, to which both of them (or the three, including *fasaad*) are seen as being opposed.

This discussion of *fowda*, *wasta*, and organization should help us towards understanding how my research participants compare and essentialize places in their everyday lives and discussions, as part of what Herzfeld called *social poetics* (Herzfeld 2005). In the next-sub chapter I will continue analyzing the stereotypes associated with locations by my research participants, through three other notions: family, money, and culture.

## 3.3 Family, money, and culture

To continue my discussion of social essentialism in the Herzfeldian vein suggested in 3.1, let me next turn to a discussion of three notions that I understand as associated with certain places in a distinctly stereotypical way. In their discussion of things that kept them attached to Beirut and Lebanon, a prime response amongst my research participants was **family**.[18] Repeated time and time again, Beirut and Lebanon was considered as the proper place for family, both among the generation of my research participants' parents, but also amongst themselves. As Zeina noted:

> When I was three years… my parents decided to come and live in Lebanon, for the family you know, to raise their kids in a healthy environment.

We can see how her parents regarded Lebanon as the proper place for raising a family after peace had returned to the country post-Taif in the 1990's.[19] Following in the same vein Hassan, a francophone guy from the West-African Lebanese diaspora who came to Beirut for University studies noted me: *"My mom wouldn't let me go to a country where there wasn't family, so didn't*

[18] I should note that my perspectives here relating to family, as in other spheres, are not intended as a commentary on a general anthropology of family in Arab or Mediterranean societies, but rather on perspectives of my research participants hailing from specific backgrounds and age groups. Thus, for example, it is implicit in the text that my research participants are mostly unmarried, and all of them without children. For example Joseph Suad has written about transnational Lebanese families and critique of methodological nationalism (Suad 2009).

[19] The Taif Agreement was the agreement that brought the Lebanese civil war to an end, negotiated in Taif in Saudi Arabia. It reasserted the principle of power sharing along sectarian lines, while taking in the increasing demographic weight of the Muslim population (Hudson 1997).

*have much choice on where to go."* So in Hassan's case the fact that he had family members in Lebanon and that her mother considered family to be the important support the young student needed in his life dictated that he would move from his native country to his ancestral country, rather than to Europe for example.

The attachment to family in Lebanon was for many of my research participants the central reason for feeling attached to the place. Let me quote Ghassan at length on the issue. Responding to my question on what he loved about Lebanon after he claimed he has a love-hate relationship to the place:

> The love… I have my family, I love them, it's my country, you have to love it even if you hate it. I love some people here. The only thing that was making up for everything was having nice people around me, and when they are gone I started seeing only the negative parts… But that's about it, I don't have any nationalistic feelings, I don't give a fuck about all that identity and pride. So that's my love, just because I'm born and from here, not because, whatever…

So even for Ghassan, the first issue he brings up in relation to his native country is his love for his family.[20] Contrasting family (and friends) to a nationalistic sentiment that is very present in the Lebanese public discussion, he bases his emotional attachment to Beirut purely on close relationships to people with whom he shares his everyday life.

Another one of my research participants, Pierre follows the same routine with Ghassan when he speaks of moving from Beirut to Miami for continuing his studies: *"I feel bad for moving out because of the friends I made, because of the family. Well, mostly the friends. I'm really attached to my friends here."* You can see how Pierre is following a strong discursive strain (repeated by others) of attachment to family as a prime reason for emotional connectedness to the country, but moves to correct himself based on an immediate critique of the discourse of family by recognizing that in reality his relations to his friends mean more to him than his family. In case of Pierre it is

[20]Note: Ghassan decries political clientelism, while at the same time expresses love for his family and other personal connections as a paramount value. There is an interesting contradiction here in terms of ethics, although in practice the contradiction is dissolved by a conceptual separation between the state and family, an explicit political goal for most of my research participants.

worth noting that he is also not from Lebanon, but rather from the diaspora in Venezuela, but as with Hassan his family sent him to their ancestral capital for studies. Thus it is recognizable that during his long stay in Beirut he has not cultivated relations with his paternal family members residing in Lebanon comparable to what Beirut-born Ghassan had. Further, implicitly there was a move that while referring to family Pierre meant his paternal extended family lineage, while for Ghassan the significant family he was referring to was mostly his mother and father.

For some of my research participants the importance of family as the significant thing in Beirut and Lebanon carried not only positive connotations.As Clara put it:

> The social life, the family gatherings where we have 200 people at lunch, that is one of the things I hate about here. I preferred in Germany or anywhere else in Europe nobody will meddle in your things, you live your own life. Here everybody has a say, even if you are married and you're 50 and you have kids, everyone will have a say. To me it is bothering.

Thus she is attaching to the importance of family the fact that having your family close by means also social control that is close by. Even though she acknowledged (as my other research participants) that she has strong emotional ties to Lebanon because of her parents and friends residing there, she recognized that having her whole Lebanese family around her also meant a degree of autonomy loss.

Furthermore, she explicitly contrasted social life in Europe and Lebanon: *"Social life here is something very positive in a persons life, in Europe it's more about working, career, living your own life. Here it's more about family, the community."*

Thus for her (and others) family carries an inherently contradictory social value. On the one hand, especially presence of parents and close family in Lebanon is considered as a significant reason for emotional attachment, and on the larger level the extended family lineage signifies the importance of community and living your life not just for personal goals. On the other hand these positive evaluations are contrasted to a perceived (and real) lack of autonomy due to social control and expectations imposed by members of the extended family. As Clara stated above, for her eventually having nobody *meddle in your things* trumped the social values, although actually

she was the one of my research participants whose presence in Beirut currently reflected an active choice on her part. On a general level this contrast between social control and autonomy was followed by other participants, such as Michel and Layla who spoke of spending their Erasmus-studies (in Prague and London, respectively) as emancipating experiences, since these were the first time they lived away from their family guidance and control, and had to learn how to take care of themselves.

What is important here in terms of my argument then is the contrast between Europe as the place of personal autonomy away-from-family on one hand, and the importance of close relationship especially to parents, but also to rest of the family in Lebanon. Thus in these evaluations Lebanon comes to exemplify the values of society and family, while Europe becomes an example of personal autonomy and development. Obviously these values/examples are construed trough practices of daily life. Since social life in Lebanon for my research participants included frequent visits to extended family, negotiations of daily life with parents, family breakfast or extended 200 person lunches (as with Clara), this daily work of social activity is the work put towards construing family as value. Meanwhile in Europe the time dedicated to learning personal autonomy (as with Michel or Layla), personal development, or experimenting with personal freedoms, is the social work that lies at the basis of the value of personal autonomy for my research participants, exemplified by Europe.

Another central issue to which our discussions around comparing places often recurred to was the issue of money. Explicitly, it came up a lot when discussing the experiences some of my research participants had of working in the Persian Gulf countries and as a general way of talking about the Gulf. There exists and has existed a strong strain of labor migration from Lebanon to the the Arab countries in the Persian Gulf region that has always been motivated by abundance of work and good pay, things that the Lebanese economy is relatively in want of. As Noor put it compactly while speaking on Lebanese migration patterns: *"Lebanese people, I suppose they would prefer to go to Saudi-Arabia, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai. Because they need to make money. You absolutely can't make money in EU."* This sentiment was seconded by other participants who noted that the cost of living in EU compared to the attainable wage seriously pales in comparison with that offered by the Emiratis, Saudis or Kuwaitis.

This focus on the relation of living expenses to wages earned is connected to a primary force pushing the Lebanese migration to the Gulf: being able to provide for a family and social responsibilities, the issues discussed above as being the top priorities for people in Lebanon (as elsewhere in the world). Thus the Lebanese stay in the Gulf is temporary in terms of attachment to place, even though in reality things are never so simple, as proposed by Tony: *"When people from Lebanon travel to gulf countries they get stuck there, because their salary goes to responsibilities in Lebanon, so they cannot leave because otherwise they can't get the same kind of money"*. Tony, having been working in Kuwait in an internship he secured with his family connections, noted that he was also selling some of his art in Kuwait, but insisted that this was only a utility to further his artistic goals: *"only because I get money, a name, and an income, only so I can invest in a bigger project in Europe or somewhere"*. To clear the issue further, he continued: *"I'm planning on going to Europe, because…I don't really live my life for money, I want some peace of mind."*

So following the general talk of why people go to the Gulf both in terms of their personal lives and in their understanding of the general Lebanese (and Levantine[21]) situation, it emerges that the countries of Gulf are associated with money and utility to further actually valued goals elsewhere, be it art projects in Europe or supporting a family in Lebanon. Thus to follow my previous generalizations, it could be claimed that the countries of the Gulf serve as an example for a something I will call here *money*, namely putting in work in order to pursue values spatially not located in the Gulf but that require financial resources not so easily accessible in Lebanon or Europe. So what I call money here is not a word for the medium of exchange, but a shorthand for the stereotypical association of the Gulf with well paid jobs and working for a salary. This stereotype is supplemented by narratives and anecdotes on how the Gulf sheikhs do not value anything except money, as for example this one offered by a friend of Tony's:

> I have a friend who lived all his life in Qatar, he always made fun of the Qatari people. Like: 'How much does it cost to make, I don't know, I want an airport here! If it's 40 million or 400 million, I don't care!' Haha, they are like this. They think only about money, what they own, what they don't own, what they want to own. Twenty

[21] During my stay in Jordan close to my field period (Spring 2016) I had effectively similar discussions about working in the Gulf with a number of Jordanian youth.

years ago they used to live in tents and they were on camels, but now they are like "Hey we have all the money of the world. We will buy everything.

So the stereotypes[22] of Gulf as a paramount example of money-as-value is not only formed through going to Gulf to work for a good salary (or discussing of the place as such), but also in terms of narratives, anecdotes and jokes making the same connection of the place and its inhabitants in themselves.

Now, when speaking of how my research participants talk of the Gulf Arab countries, I should be careful to point out some things that relate to differentiation between different places in the Gulf described by my research participants. While they did often speak of the Gulf countries through generalization, while pushed to speak more specifically of their views or experiences they were also careful to notice important differences in their relations to the Gulf. Though the situation is obviously more complex (with 6 countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council), I will present a comparison between Kuwait and the Emirates, countries that are primary destinations for the Lebanese looking to work in the region and form a complementary pair in terms of what my research participants named *culture*.

Once while driving with Ghassan and Michel along the coastal highway north of Beirut, heading to attend a birthday party, a big roadside advertisement, hung on a building, for the UAE airline company Emirates came up. Michel, in a joking mood as so often, from behind the wheel holding a small bottle of beer he had just opened, immediately pointed it out to us and proceeded to laughingly notify Ghassan: *"Ghassan haha that's for you, to Dubai! You will need it, a small rehab."*

The important features brought up relate primarily to the conservativeness of the regime. Since, I should note, a lot of my research participants were involved in the arts and culture fields professionally, or at least took a strong interest to them, and furthermore almost all of them were frequenters of the lively Beirut nightlife. Thus Kuwait, with its more conservative legal and social regime in relation to cultural life, alcohol, and social freedoms, was perceived as essentially

[22] It is very important here to remember our discussion of stereotypes as examples presented earlier. That my research participants use the Gulf as a stereotypical example, but it does not imply they actually think the place is exactly as such, or only such.

*boring*, and thus a place only to put in work to advance one's career or gather necessary financial resources. Meanwhile the United Arab Emirates and their ultra-capitalist centers of Dubai and Abu Dhabi have more relaxed policies and more social tolerance in terms of these issues, and reflexively were identified by my research participants as generally preferable to Kuwait. But nonetheless, as visible from the jokes above, the Emirates as well faced an aversion from my Beiruti research participants that identified it with two things they disliked in Lebanon with equal forte: cultural conservatism and capitalism.

The notion of *culture* utilized by my research participants in the more restricted sense of the term (not the anthropological sense) of arts and cultured social life in these context carried an important weight on their perception of issues beyond the Gulf. So let me quote Clara again on how she spoke of the availability of cultural events in Europe, Lebanon and the UAE, placing them on a neat scale:

> When I go to UAE it's not like I have ten events to choose from, maybe one or two per night. In Beirut there is at least 5 to 6 events everywhere. But what I miss here is good theater, I learned to like theater in Europe and I miss it.

I would also claim that this usage of the term *culture* generally in a positive sense in evaluating the availability, accessibility, and state of cultural fields such as theater, and the other, anthropological sense of culture (as in *local culture*) that my research participants also utilized is deeply connected, albeit different. On multiple occasions I heard people both lamenting how the Gulf countries abandoning their culture to pursue western capitalist connections, and how simultaneously the Gulf culture (apparently what remained of it) was off-putting to the Beiruti mindset due to its inherent conservativeness. So for example when discussing the fact that many young upper class people in the Emirates have never gained a good command of the Arabic language, my friend of Iraqi background Sabah commented to me: *"Both in the UAE and here there is like a neglect of local culture, a neglect of language. It's different because in the UAE it's driven by different forces and causes."* This sentiment on the Lebanese relation to language and culture was not seconded by my research participants of Lebanese background, wherein usually a more complex treatment of the issue was proposed. Sabah, working in social scientific research herself, points here as well towards such complexity with her idea of 'different forces and causes'.

## 3.4 Value and action

What I am trying to get to with the discussion above is establishing that in evaluating and comparing different locations in terms of travel my research participants resorted consistently to some categories to explain their relation and understanding to these locations. To recount here, the main categories that came up in my data were **wasta**(or clientelism), **fowda**(or chaos), **family**, **culture** and **money**. Of these, *wasta* and *fowda* are concepts central to my research participants understanding of the Lebanese society and also things they told made them feel uncomfortable in Beirut. They are also deeply interconnected, as suggested above. In some way, when participants spoke of Europe as a place they hoped to travel or migrate to, they often mentioned how life there is more **organized**, a concept standing in binary opposition to both *fowda* and *wasta*. Meanwhile the rest of the concepts, family, culture and money, seem to have a triadic relationship, with family associated with Lebanon, culture associated primarily with Europe and money associated primarily with the Gulf. As noted before, money is seen by participants only as a mediating value, affording effort to be put in realizing family and culture. Obviously these associations are not strict and we should rather consider them as relative both in terms of individual variation and experiences, and in terms of scale between different locations.

But let me explain what I mean here when discussing value. As we know, lately anthropology has grown a renewed interest in theories of value [Otto and Willerslev (2013). In my general understanding of how value works, I follow what could be called the Marx-Munn-Graeber descent line (Marx [1867] 1967; Munn 1986; Graeber 2001), the idea that value is, to quote Graeber, *"the way people represent the importance of their own actions to themselves: normally, as reflected in one or another socially recognized form."* (Graeber 2001 p.47). I will not explicate here Graeber's whole argument, beautifully presented especially in chapter 3 of his 2001 book (Graeber 2001 pp.47-89), but let me just provide here an oversimplification. He starts from Marx's labor theory of value, that is from the notion that human labor is what ultimately creates value. He then proceeds to read Marx through Nancy Munn and Terence Turner[23] to probe how this process of

[23] It is better (for comprehension) to read the impressive but obscure work of Terence Turner through Graeber's interpretation (eg. Graeber 2001 pp.68-75), but for those who wish to dare the originals, Graeber has compiled us a bibliography. This can be found in the 2013 "It is value that brings universes into being" (Graeber 2013), a kind of belated prolegomena to "Toward an anthropological theory of value".

value-creation and realization would work in non-market societies, or in market societies in areas where the market does not set the standards of value. Now, since Graeber can explain this better than I, let me quote on his explanation of the value production and realization according to Turner's research among the Kayapo of Brazil:

> Value, then, is realized mainly in the public, communal sphere, in the form of concrete circulating media of value - in part, the ceremonial valuables and roles mentioned above, but mainly in the forms of access to the most prestigious forms of verbal performance in public (ritual and especially political) life: keening, formal oratory, chiefly chanting. These latter forms of value created in the domestic sphere, at the same time as they are realized largely within institutions that are modeled on the key relations through which those forms of value are created. They are also realized in a distinctly unequal fashion; and that inequality is a direct result of the effective appropriation by some of the products of others' labor. (Graeber 2001 p.74)

What then, is the relevance here to my material? The notion that the Marxian principle of labor value does work on relatively similar basis outside of the workplace and capitalist market. If for Kayapo, the communal value stored in access to forms of public performance is created in the domestic sphere, so are the values I suggest guide my research participants sense of location based on where they put their 'creative energies' (Graeber 2001 p.68) to work. Since my research participants are parts of a capitalist market society, let me quote Graeber again:

> Of course, even where most people are wage laborers, it's not as if all creativity is on the market. Even in our own market-ridden society there are all sorts of domains - ranging from housework to hobbies, political action, personal projects of any sort - where [there] is no such homogeneous apparatus. But it is probably no coincidence that it's precisely here where one hears about values in the plural sense: family values, religious values, the aesthetic values of art, and so on. Where there is no single system of value, one is left with a whole series of heterogenous, disparate ones. (Graeber 2001 p.56)

So, from Graeber we learn several important things. That value in Graeber's view is ultimately the way people represent the importance of their actions to themselves, and that value is generated as a result of human creative energies at work, and that capitalist value and 'values' are related but different. What I will suggest next might be a bit unorthodox: to borrow some ideas from Joel Robbins (Robbins 2015) to work as a bridge between a Graeberian understanding of value, and what we learned of stereotypes from Michael Herzfeld above.[24] Actually the idea I will draw on here is simple.

Robbins starts from the question of where do values[25] actually exist, and where do people encounter them in their everyday lives. He proposes a simple answer: in example, and particularly in exemplary action, such as a successful ritual. Thus, *"Realized in ritual, a form of 'actual' as opposed to merely 'imaginary' social life, these values gain 'real' as opposed to simply 'ideal' force in moving people into the future."* (Robbins 2015 p.28). My own material here is not really so much concerned with action, and even less with ritual or exemplary action. Luckily for me, Robbins notes in a footnote: "*I should stress at this point in my argument that I do not think rituals are the only places one finds values represented in relatively fully realized form in social life. Some myths and other narrative forms surely work out similar representations.*" (Robbins 2015 p.28 note 3).

So, I would like to claim that what we have learned of stereotypes, value, and example somehow fits together. That the way my research participants use stereotypes to describe important places in their life (such as Lebanon, Europe, the Gulf countries) implies that these places (or stereotypes of places) might be what Robbins refers to as 'some myths or other narrative forms' where we might find 'values represented in relatively fully realized form'.

Of the triad of family, culture, and money, I essentially claim that the places they are primarily attached to also act as examples of these values. Thus, Europe is not only the place where my research participants go to strive for non-monetary social values of art and free life, symbolized

[24] Not only unorthodox in the sense of trying to pull together quite different strains of thought as in Herzfeld and Graeber, but furthermore since Graeber spends much of his 2013 article (Graeber 2013 pp.235-238) bashing Robbin's (mis)understanding of value.

[25] Robbins always talks of values, never value, and on the side brushes aside the understanding of the connection between economic value and social values that is at the core of the intellectual descent line I described above. This brushing aside is at the core of Graeber's animosity towards Robbins.

here by the concept of culture, but also stands as the example for these values in the Lebanese context. Similarly, the Gulf is not only the place where Lebanese consider going to work for the *sheiks* to earn some dollars, but also in the talk of foreign places and life-values amongst my research participants the Gulf countries essentially exemplified the value I call here money. And finally, Lebanon itself is both the place where family as a social value is pursued in everyday life and the example of proper order of family life, or family as a value.

Further, following from above, it should be claimed that these values are put together by the very praxis of striving for them. Thus Lebanon's relation to the value of family is produced and reproduced by the social work (that is, actions and creativity in the Graeberian sense) done by my research participants and their peers: such as Clara attending 200 person family lunches, Michel living with his grandparents, and by myriad social visits and talk of these visits. Likewise Gulf comes to be the example of money due to people traveling there mainly investing their creative energies in work for money (whether that work be middle class or more working class) and not really attaching to the countries in significant way. And Europe, for many of my research participants, was a destination for experimentation with personal freedoms, artistic forms not prevalent in Lebanon, engagement with well organized state institutions. Obviously a thorough ethnographic examination of these processes of value formation is way beyond the scope of this work. For my purposes it suffices to claim that for the way my research participants compare these places, this process of evaluation is connected to praxis, and that the wish to strive for values, the praxis of social work, and value of places are connected in a kind of positive feedback loop. So value begets action to strive for the value, and that action in turn ends up producing the value.

And since it is attachment, movement, and talk of these I am generally interested in, I feel it is obvious that somewhere in the midst of praxis and value lie some answers as well to why people attach to locations and relocate between them. I believe the discussion presented in this chapter has provided some directions on how my research participants form a sense of their location through comparison and use of stereotypes. In the coming chapters we will move to other forms of engagement that I suggest are as well part of the process of forming a sense of location.

Let me tie up this chapter with another example. One night we were hanging out on a street corner, sitting on a window board of a shop with Ghassan and Hassan. Our other friends were

some distance away in a bar which we left for some talk and cheaper drinks bought from a *dukkane* (small shop). Hassan has been discussing his plans to leave the country come next year, to which Ghassan has objected. Hassan exclaims: *"I like Beirut so much, I don't want to leave. But Ghassan, do you want me to stay in that bookshop getting 800 dollars a month my whole life?"* . In a joking but serious tone slightly drunk Ghassan wails in response: *"Buhuuuu everyone is leaving, I'm so sad. Everyone I know has left, all my friends. And now you are leaving."* Hassan doesn't answer and after a small silence the discussion drifts off to other subjects.

# 4. Future, the state, and protest

In the previous chapter I presented a major argument based on anthropological discussions around value and stereotypes in relation to my own fieldwork. I ended the chapter with a short anecdote about leaving Beirut, where my research participants intimately connect their sense of location to the values discussed before. Then, in this chapter I will continue with ethnographic discussion of these themes. In the first part I look at how participants discuss their attachment to places and how they discuss imagining their futures. In the second part I briefly discuss the Lebanese state and some anthropological discussions on state. In the final part I turn to another ethnographic case-study on the social movements that shook Lebanon during the fall 2015, and relate it once again to how such encounters shape my research participants' sense of their location.

## 4.1 Attachments and imagined futures

Being attached to places and the concept of home were important issues for my research participants, not least because many of them were also currently engaged in active considerations of relocation. Thus as Ghassan was thinking about his choices professionally, he pointed to me *"I don't want to build a career here, I don't want something to attach me."*. So in his case the attachment to Beirut he was steering away was of a practical sort, not wanting to have a job that it would be difficult to leave. As others, he also clearly recognized that building attachments is an active process that one can influence by one's choices and evaluate based on one's aims.

Beirut for many of my research participants was not a place where they imagined their future. Some of them, having grown up outside Lebanon (even though of Lebanese ancestry) considered it as rather a place of transit, while some of those who grew up in Beirut were busy imagining their futures elsewhere. Let me quote Michel at length, who grew up in Beirut, reflecting on his experiences in Prague and how it changed the way he is imagining his future:

> Even in the future, I keep imagining myself, I keep telling myself that OK I love my country and everything, but I'm not sure I can, after living all of this, I can really stay here. Because I acquired many experiences with which I discovered the

> possibilities of life and freedom. And not being oppressed, like Lebanon is not that bad actually. I compared this experience to many road movies I watched, like there are even people who are living for example in the US and they are still not satisfied with their freedom, and for me its much the same.

So while claiming that his experience in Europe changed how he felt about staying in his native country, he presents a complex narrative claiming that while he feels Lebanon is oppressive but *"not that bad actually"*. His acquaintance with American popular culture allows him to frame his narrative in terms of the road movie genre, where an epic journey out of the protagonists native city takes him on a quest of personal change and new perspectives on everyday life.[26] Here however it should be noted that Michel delivers his evaluation of his relevant location and the future he imagines for himself in the binary terms freedom/oppression and his personal experiences of them. Incorporating the road movie genre he claims to be changed by his experiences, unable to stay attached to his native country after a reconfiguration of his relation to Europe and Lebanon in terms of the above mentioned binary. However, it should be noted that Michel here is not claiming any kind of a change in *identity* as such, but rather that his experience led him to re-evaluate his relation to the locations he here narrates according to the stereotypical binary of Europe/freedom and Lebanon/oppression (that he immediately proceeds to problematize with his road movie analogy).

Obviously there were also those who made a point of staying in the country, but even some of them expressed conflicting sentiments. Such as Clara, when she noted of her decision to build her life in Beirut: *"So it's more emotional, its not very rational. Rationally I would pack my bags and go now, because this country drives me crazy."*.

As noted in the subchapter above, for many of those bent on imagining their future in Beirut, the main motivator for this was the value they placed on family relations. This was seconded once again by Clara as she continued recounting her feelings on Beirut: *"I feel a deep connection with the country, not the people. Like every time I go away, I'm going to the airport, I feel already*

[26]The connection of narratives of travel and notions of freedom utilized by young Beirutis to American popular culture and its forefathers in the epic journey genre stretching back to the *Odysseia* would be an interesting topic for another study but is beyond the scope of this one.

*nostalgia, I miss Beirut, I'm gonna miss my family, my friends. And then when I'm coming back, before the plane lands, I'm like, what am I doing here."*

Thus nostalgia, missing people and places, can be seen as important for how my research participants relate to places. It should also be noted how Clara contrasts her family and friends, that is her personal connections, to the "people" she claims not to be connected with. That was somewhat seconded by Ghassan when he claimed that *"I'm born here but I can't feel it… and also because people are nasty and homophobic, which is really mean"*. Thus for my research participants an abstract and stereotypical *people* of Beirut stands in contrast to their own social contacts, namely family and friends.

Focus on the importance of family attachments was repeated by Zeina when commenting why she and her friend Noor returned to Lebanon with the intent of building their lives in the country: *"This is why we both came back to Lebanon. We wanted to live with them and didn't want to live by ourselves. We are very attached to our families."* "People" in contrast with family and friends are chaotic, nasty, homophobic or close minded, while personal relations with people are reason for nostalgia, attachment and staying in the country.

On the side of my research participants who didn't grow up in Beirut, feelings of home and nostalgia were obviously different. This could be seen for example in how Hassan responded to me when queried on whether he considered perhaps Beirut or his native West African country as home: *"I guess until now I never really found a home. When I'm with friends that I'm really having a good time, that's when I feel at home. But I guess in a country that actually respects its people, I would feel home in any country that actually respects human beings."* So here we see it again: it's friends and close relations that make a place home, allow for and motivate for forging emotional attachments. But Hassan takes it further, not only claiming "people" as a problem blocking emotional attachment but also the "country."

In this, Hassan clearly takes up the important theme of the Lebanese state and its bureaucracy as a core issue also in terms of attachment. Thus he says "country", but I would claim that what he means is also "state". This diverges from how Clara uses the term country in the above sentiment, when she claims, following her above statement: *"So, this is what annoys me. But I love the country. I love going to the countryside in half an hour, I love being able to see my family if I drive for an hour, it's not like I have to take the plane and travel for 10 hours to see*

*them."* For Clara, country is more like the landscape, possibility of reaching relatives, seeing the beautiful slopes of Mount Lebanon.

In the interviews there was also a sense of traveling ethos put forward by a number of participants. This was perhaps most strongly explained by Hassan, when he claimed *"I think we are meant to experience as much as we can. It's not a good thing to just live in one place. You know, in the end, home is going to be all these places where, like you said, you are emotionally attached. You can always keep on moving and moving, and never find where you can call home."* So for him there is inherent value in just moving and moving, in a contradictory way he simultaneously values how one can move and move and never find a home yet also claims feeling at home is definitely positive.

This praise of travel was seconded among others by Sarah, claiming that *"I think at this age we should travel all over the world and discover a lot of things."*. Sarah's claim does differ from what Hassan says though, since she is referring to her experience as a student in Brussels, and why she thinks other Lebanese youth should travel abroad (and return to Lebanon, perhaps), while for Hassan the value of travel is connected to a more nomadic ethos. Although to be fair, Sarah was among those participants fast at work imagining her future elsewhere, outside Lebanon, or as she commented on Brussels: *"I can imagine myself, not now, but after my masters thesis, finding a job and living there, it's really very very nice."*.

As for imagining a future outside of Lebanon, a glimpse of the complex calculations and considerations at work are visible from Layla's statement:

> I may be going to Paris because my brother is there. I don't like to go to Canada because of the cold. I prefer to go to Europe because it's more cultural and it's better for the cinema. I didn't decide yet but I think I will go to France. I'll find the best thing for me.

What's interesting about this is the relative ease with which she compares different possibilities. Being a student of cinema, she clearly considers herself capable of making educated comparisons between different locations and weighing in issues such as atmosphere, family, the value of cultural life. The feeling of her discussion is not one of a jump to the unknown, but rather one of

familiarity with different locations and a clear (yet stereotypical as noted before) picture of what different places exemplify and why she would imagine her future self as relocating to one of the places she considers. And she claims confidence in finding "whats best for her", a notion bent on pursuing individual autonomy and values she personally considers dear.

And in terms of imagining, I should note that the way my research participants were imagining themselves was definitely not always temporal. Experiences and stereotypes of places spatially far could be used as forging a sense of location in the here-and-now as well. To convey just one example, once I was walking with Zeina and Noor from the huge SUV they were driving to a certain café. The café being closed, we had to walk a bit more to reach the next candidate, and while stopping at the traffic-lights Zeina noted: *"walking makes me feel like we are in Europe. Here we never walk… or at least we."* Even with the pause and critical move from a generalized Lebanese we to a we covering just her and her friend, she was actively at work imagining and comparing her being-in-the-city in Europe with Beirut.

So what to make of this talk on nostalgia, attachment, travel and home? One point is that as seen by my research participants, as already seen in the chapter above, it is close relationships with family and friends that are seen as affording the possibility of forging strong attachment to the country. Another is that feeling connected to a place implies active choice or work on one's part. On the other side, Beirut is seen by some living there as a sort of transit location, with them imagining futures already elsewhere. Among my research participants this feeling was divided amongst those of Lebanese ancestry who grew up outside the country and imagined moving on outside it again given the correct time, and those having grown up in the country were nonetheless readily imagining their futures elsewhere. A central obstacle to wanting to imagine their futures in Beirut was named by my research participants (in this subchapter and the ones above) as how the "people" or "country" is, or named as chaos, clientelism and social control. I would claim that chaos and clientelism have a lot to do with perceptions of bureaucracy and its effectiveness, that is perceptions of state. And in the next subchapter we will turn to a case-study of the state and protest against its current organization that rocked Beirut in the fall 2015.

## 4.2 State and bureaucracy

Before turning to the promised case-study of protest, a short look at literature on the state is in order. As noted above, a major part of what worried my research participants in Beirut was what they named as chaos or *fowda* and the connected notion of corruption or *fasaad*.[27] This was already touched upon in our discussion of Monroe's book (Monroe 2016), but I wish to take the discussion here a bit further. Since Lebanon is a country still recovering from a long civil war, characterized by a political order based on confessional power sharing and shaken by occasional civil conflict even in the post-war era (Khalaf 2012; Firro 2003), Lebanon has been of immense interest for scholars, journalists and other professional instances focusing on weak state structures.

Nikolas Kosmatopoulos writes in a beautiful article on the Hobbesian underpinnings of the academic industry in Lebanon around the "failed state" (Kosmatopoulos 2011). He notes how *"the generic label 'failed state' contributes to the construction of an atmosphere of constant crisis in Lebanon and beyond"* and *"introduce a vision of history and geography through the frames of failure, deficit and lack, but also - and more crucially - present contemporary world affairs within an increasingly bellicose atmosphere"* and finally *"crucially revitalizes - both in the epistemological and in political terms - what Wittgenstein would call 'the grammar' of the state"* (Kosmatopoulos 2011 p.134). Then again, the expert focus on problematizing the Lebanese state is soundly seconded amongst the people of Beirut, noted by social scientist working in the city, amongst them Kosmatopoulos himself (Kosmatopoulos 2011 p.116) and Monroe (Monroe 2016 pp.121-127). The expression *ma fi dawle bi Lubnan* (there is no state in Lebanon) was also common among my own research participants.

As claimed above, this has a lot to do with corruption and favoritism, perceived in everyday encounters with the state manifested in spheres of life such as traffic (as in Monroe), bureaucratic paperwork (as in chapter 5 of this text) or in the lack of basic services such as waste management (as in the next subchapter). In an interesting way, the situation in Beirut echoes Herzfeld's words on the Greek state: *"Because the Greek bureaucratic system derives so heavily from 'Western*

[27] For a study of post-civil war corruption and the Lebanese state, see the *Spoils of Truce* by Reinoud Leenders (Leenders 2012).

*models', and because nevertheless its apparent failures are almost always blamed on 'Oriental' features in its actual operation"*(Herzfeld 1992 p.149). So then, in many ways, when Beirutis are decrying the corrupt or inefficient bureaucracy they are reminiscent of Paul du Gay in his *In Praise of Bureaucracy* (du Gay 2000), longing for a particular bureaucratic ethos that would diverge from the shortcomings of the actually existing one in Beirut. Indeed, even du Gay's opening phrases sound familiar to one who has listened to Beiruti complaints of the local state: "*The bureau carries a very hefty 'charge sheet', inscribed with multiple offences ranging from the relatively banal - procrastination, obfuscation, circumlocution and other 'typical products' of a 'red tape' mentality - to the truly heinous - genocide, totalitarianism, despotism"* (du Gay 2000 p.1).

However, unlike du Gay's nemeses who call for and celebrate the demise of bureaucracy, the Beirutis with whom I grew familiar (and I suppose the citizen at large) rather join du Gay (and the failed-state experts Kosmatopoulos describes) in longing for a less chaotic and more organized bureaucracy.[28] Or as Monroe writes in her ethnography: *"Beirutis' claims that 'there is no state' are expressions of a desire for something different. ... people express unfulfilled expectations for a state that might serve as a protector, and a provider, for ordinary citizens."* (Monroe 2016 p.127)

Now, the functioning or non-functioning of bureaucracies has obviously been of interest to anthropologists as of late. Furthermore, this relates to the critical discussions of an analytical a priori detachment of state from society and the tendency of starting to search rather for the everyday enactments of and encounters with the state. For example, as Navaro-Yashin has claimed, sometimes public life and civil society can be 'more statist than the state' (Navaro-Yashin 2002 p.119). The same tone is visible in Herzfeld's social poetics of nationalism discussed above in chapter 5.1 (Herzfeld 2005). And in her important book *Border Work*, Madeleine Reeves follows in the same vein, exploring how the state is incorporated and enacted in myriad, a priori uncertain, border encounters in the Central Asian Ferghana valley (Reeves 2014).[29]

[28] This can be read according to my treatment of value and stereotypes presented above as: less oriental, more occidental. Or even, somewhat overlapping, according to the traditional distinction in western social sciences between traditional and modern societies as: less traditional, more modern.

[29] Although, for a neat ethnographic account of a context where an analytical state/society dicothomy might defend its place for ethnographic (and political) reasons, see for example Graeber's essay *Provisional Autonomous Zone* (Graeber 2007 pp.157-189). This is obviously related to the tradition started by Clastres (Clastres [1974] 1987) and

However, in an interesting vein, my data from Beirut works in a direction opposite to Herzfeld's and Navaro-Yashin's focus on nationalism. My research participants do not frame their longing for a state in a nationalist vocabulary. Also, while Herzfeld and Navaro-Yashin look for enactment of the state through 'example' and 'mundane practices of everyday life', my research participants were rather constructing the lack or non-presence of state as a moral shortcoming. So there is contradiction at play here, although as Monroe notes, the sense of 'lack' of state is equally constituted in mundane everyday encounters, that leave: *"Beirut's citizens discontented and with unfulfilled aspirations for the well-functioning, respectable and protective state that could be."*(Monroe 2016 p.138)

This diverges from Navaro-Yashin's treatment of fantasies for the state (e.g. Navaro-Yashin 2002 pp.161-162), in that the people don't *persist in carrying on with their everyday practices as if the state were a unity*, but rather employ a moral claim of a state that 'ought to be'.[30] Interestingly enough, this same process has already been written of in a Lebanese context, albeit in the symbolically and geographically marginal setting of the city of Arsal. Here Michelle Obeid follows Navaro-Yashin's idiom of 'faces of the state' in looking at how Arsal's residents are looking for, but have not found, among the faces (*wujuh* in Lebanese vernacular) of the state for the ideal one (Obeid 2010; see also Obeid 2011). So the same search for the 'ideal state', the state that ought to be, is found not only in Lebanon's symbolic center, but also in its periphery.

So then, let me turn to a case-study of the search for the state that ought to be, that will also clarify how encounters with the state shape and affect my research participants sense of their relative location in the world.

## 4.3 Political concerns: a loss of commitment, a glimmer of hope

August 2015 saw tens of thousands of demonstrators hit the streets of Beirut. The situation had been brewing for a while. Let me quote here activist and scholar Maya Mikdashi writing from

carried on as well by James Scott (Scott 1998; Scott 2009).

[30] Although Navaro-Yashin does note a divide between the actual Turkish state that is known to be thoroughly corrupt, and the ideal state that makes people proud to be Turkish (Navaro-Yashin 2002 p.185). This is not so far from the situation in Lebanon, where national symbols carried a strong position, and I suppose had I carried my fieldwork in more politically nationalist circles the case would have been exactly as in Navaro-Yashin's material. For example Bruno Lefort has recently carried out fieldwork with nationalist political groups in Beirut (Lefort 2016).

midst of the movement, for the immediate background of the protests:

> The protests of today were born out of frustration and anger over the trash buildup in Beirut and Lebanon in July 2015. During this month garbage collection stopped in Beirut as citizens and residents successfully closed a landfill that had been dangerously filled to over capacity. This landfill that began functioning in 1997 as a "temporary" solution to Lebanon's garbage. In 2014 the government had made promises to find an alternative when residents previously blocked access to the landfill, but no action was taken. The government failed to find a solution. In July 2015, after the garbage had not been picked up in Beirut for weeks, the government began trucking and dumping this trash to and in towns and municipalities around Beirut without the consent (or sometimes knowledge) of the residents of those municipalities. The country, quite literally, was turned into a mass garbage dump by the inactions and corruption of the ruling state-business elite. People are living among the waste of the system. The most vulnerable, the homeless (most of them refuges from war torn Syria) are literally living within it. (Mikdashi 2015)

Obviously the events of Fall 2015 had their predecessors in movements and activist networks that had been slowly growing, organizing and fluctuating in the years before. There had been mobilizations on different feminist issues, on migrant solidarity, against the sectarian system and for a civil marriage law, in addition to strikes and other forms of labor activism. (Mikdashi 2015) However, what transpired during my fieldwork took a central stage in the imaginations of my research participants and connected in a profound way to what I am discussing in this thesis.

To quote Hassan again from the chapter above: *"I would feel home in any country that actually respects human beings."*

On August 22. we are walking with my flatmate Mariam and her friend Lina from our apartment in the Sodeco neighborhood down towards the coastline and the Martyr's Square, where we know the demonstration is convening. I notice a relatively small number of cars on the move, but small groups of people drifting on feet down the road, many brandishing the Lebanese flag of white, red and a green cedar tree. On the way towards the square more and more people show up from

side streets, and suddenly there is already a significant number of people heading in the same direction. We pass a small shop selling Lebanese flags and other related items and a number of people negotiating with the shopkeeper about the flags. After some 15 minutes walking we arrive at the Square, noticing that the demonstration is not on the huge square (the historical square these days was rather an opening of wasteland flanked by some busy roads, construction sites and the enormous Al-Amin Mosque) but there is an increasing number of people hanging around holding flags and moving about. We realize that the demonstration itself is on the adjacent smaller square of Riadh al-Solh facing the Prime Ministers headquarters at the Grand Serail.

The alley leading up to Riadh al-Solh is crowding with people, old and young, and flanked on one hand by police barricades that block entry towards another nearby square (The Nijme) wherein lies the parliament building. Walking up the alley, Rayan and Lina greet many of their friends, make introductions, and we move on again. There must be at least several thousand people around. The atmosphere is festive, people are shouting slogans: notable amongst them "Thawra, thawra" (revolution, revolution) and "As-Sha'ab yurid isqat an-Nizam" (the people wants to bring down the regime). At the square itself demonstrators are facing an impressive police barricade in front of the prime minister's building: multiple layers of barbed wire, behind it a line of police and some water cannon trucks. We spend time around, smoking cigarettes, taking selfies, chatting to people, listening to the chants. Later on the atmosphere gets electrified, new groups of young men push to the front brandishing long toy-sticks made of empty plastic water bottles.[31] We get an uncanny feeling that there might be confrontations with the police and decide to withdraw from the still festive crowd shining in colors of the Lebanese flag. Later we hear that the police opened fire on the crowd with water cannons, apparently without provocation, in order to to disperse the crowd, and the activist groups organizing the 's protests vowed to return to the streets again in even larger numbers. This demonstration was one of the first smaller protests, and provoked by the officials violent response, the mood in the city changed, with the next weeks seeing demonstrations with tens of thousands of participants. Also, there were to come confrontations, with more than just water cannons used on the protesters.

[31] In my personal opinion, a beautiful symbol of militant protest, as if the youth were saying: If the regime leaves us with nothing but garbage, then we shall protest with the garbage as our weapon. This motif was repeated later during the fall multiple times, for example with the #YouStink group building a wooden catapult to sling trash bags over police barricades.

It's no coincidence that the demonstrators took up slogans made famous during the Arab spring protests five years earlier, calling for revolution and removal of the regime. It's relevant for us because of of what Hassan told us earlier: that he would feel home at any country that respects human beings. The revolutionary movements that rocked the MENA-region were called by many with the name Arab Spring, but more preferred to name them *"Thawra al-Karama"*, revolution of dignity. The Arabic word *karama* has (among others) the dictionary translations of honor, dignity, respect. As noted by Michelle Dunne (Dunne 2013) *"Another frequent demand in several Arab Spring countries was "karama," dignity. What the revolts all boiled down to was a call for a different relationship between citizen and government: a rejection of corrupt, repressive regimes that treated citizens as subjects without rights, paired with outrage at the capture of most economic benefits by government officials and their cronies."*

So when Hassan taps into calling for respect from wherever he should feel at home, he is connecting to the same discussions as the demonstrators in Riadh al-Solh -square (one of whom he actually was), when they were shouting out the time-tested slogan of *"As-Sha'ab yurid isqat an-nizam"*. The idea of a political regime that doesn't respect its citizens, making life unbearable, was well alive in Lebanon during my stay and seemed to form the core of understanding of local and regional politics for most of my research participants.

The cycle of popular movement that launched in early Áugust 2015 gathered steam, but the regime remained unwavering with all the established political forces rallied to protect the status quo. With huge demonstrations not leading to any outcomes and strategies of escalation by some groups not working either, people started losing faith and the movement started loosing steam (albeit many of the groups founded during the movement are still active as of fall 2016). While some of my research participants joined in on the general enthusiasm surrounding the protest movement, some obviously remained more sceptical.

Let me quote here my research participant Sarah, providing her insights on the Lebanese politicians and the political system:

> I think its a mess. We should kill them all. Because no one is honest and everyone is following his own political party and I'm against this. We should have a new party, that is very neutral, that is only interested in the interested in the interest of

> the country. Like good politicians, not like politicians who are just in it for money and advantage and benefit from their positions.

So thus for her, even radical solutions (although she obviously was joking with the killing part) are needed to solve the situation.[32] However, she follows the common discussion on politics amongst my research participants: that the current politicians are just after money and advantage and benefit from their positions, and that this system of open official corruption stands opposed to my research participants feeling at ease in their country. For example, Michel stated that when he sees Lebanese politicians on the TV he feels awkward: *"I can't look at this guy, he's taking himself seriously. You know how the world has this image of North Korea's Kim Jong-il, like he's that funny guy. For me all Lebanese politicians are like this."* and continued lamenting on the general ineffectiveness and open corruption of the politicians claiming he really can't respect them at all.

To return for a moment to how the protest movement then did effect change in Beirut, Hassan claimed: *Before this year I was thinking of staying and improving my life here, but the recent events made the decision for me.* Without needing to explain further, the recent events he is referring to are the above mentioned bureaucratic inefficiency in front of the trash crisis and realization of the fact that the system of governance didn't bend when facing popular protest. However, Michel, always the optimist, took a different path in noting that *"the movement that happened this year, it never happened before. So it's a sign that people are slowly changing."*

Let me provide another example: a photo of a Lebanese protester writing with a spray can in front of a line of police officers taken during the protests of August 2015 in downtown Beirut that was spreading widely on Lebanese social media. He is a youth in his twenties or thirties, dressed in jeans and t-shirt, in front of a line of twenty or so police officers (mostly youth themselves, around the same age group) standing in front of the barricade blocking access to the road leading to the Lebanese parliament house. The police are armed with riot gear, though the situation itself is not tense. However what the youth is writing on the ground with his spray can in an act of

[32] On many occasions my research participants lamented that even deaths of leading civil war -era politicians are not be enough, since the political classes have entrenched themselves in feudal arrangements where power just passes on to their children or other family members. For a portrait and explanation of one of the local warlords, Free Patriotic Movements Michael Aoun, see (Lefort 2015).

revolutionary bravado to mock the police is the main content of the photo. The text, written twice in red paint and with arrows intended to make clear who it refers to, reads *jidaar al-fasaad*, "the Wall of Corruption".

Thus the youth explicates the popular sentiment and provides a narrative for why some protesters were even willing to escalate their tactics against the officials. The text taps into the popular discourse on corruption, and points to how to police (thus the state monopoly of violence[33]) stands in the way of protest to affect the corrupted political class. Somewhat symbolically the police barrier and line of policemen in front of it not only blocks the road to the parliament, perceived location of *fasaad* or corruption. It also blocks the protesters already some distance from the parliament, effectively insulating the parliament from the protesters by more than a rocks throw. So here we have the parliament, where the problems of the Lebanese society in form of corruption and *wasta* are symbolically located, and in front of it a line of police, acting effectively as a wall. The graffiti *jidaar al-fasaad*, Wall of Corruption, denounces in one gesture both the political class identified with corruption, and the state violence that prevents the public from engaging in the political process.[34]

The reason for this discussion of protest, dignity and politicians is that I claim that for many of my research participants the way the bureaucratic inefficiency (or failure of governance) coalesced with a failure of protest to effect change in their conditions was important in respect to their sense of location. Thus there are two major issues at play here. First, the corruption and the corrupted political class are a constant source of negative feelings and frustration, causing many of my research participants to not feel at home in their country, or in any case not identify with the Lebanese state. This becomes concrete in the everyday problems of missing waste management and lacking water and electricity infrastructure, but is also connected to problems my research participants faced when dealing with the state bureaucracy when applying for travel documents,

[33] Although in a strict sense there is no state monopoly of violence in a country where some political militias are stronger (and as legitimate) than the state forces, though this is a consistent focus of academic and popular debate. If one wishes to dive into the counter-terrorism -funded Hezbollah-scholarship, one might as well start from a book by an Israeli army officer (Azani 2009).

[34] Perhaps the depiction of the Lebanese state here could be seen as yet another stereotype, of a third world government with predictable flaws that contrast with governments in rich countries. In regards my conception of *social poetics* I do consider this true, although the issue of the Lebanese state can of course not be answered thoroughly through a discussion of essentialism.

for example (more on this in the chapter below). In some way the corruption of the political class and its insulation from popular politics meant for my generally very socially engaged research participants that they were disconnected from the political process and thus the governance of their lives.

The second issue is the popular movement as a means of reclaiming respect, *karama*, of the people from the political class. Here, as my research participants were connecting and sympathizing with the popular movements that arose in Beirut during the fall 2015, they were enthused by the prospect of engaging with the political process in their country and thus engaging with the state in ways they couldn't do before. When the movements failed to reach either their limited goals (of solving the waste management crisis) or their more far reaching goals (of reorganizing the Lebanese political sphere) and lost steam, my research participants evaluated this process in different ways. As Hassan said, it was the straw that broke the camel's back and made him plan leaving the country. Or as Michel said, it provided him with a glimmer of hope that things might be slowly changing and there could be hope yet for his country.

So put together, we see here a dual movement of a dysfunctional political system (in eyes of my research participants) preventing them from practically and emotionally engaging with their state and country and the protest movement providing a possibility that perhaps political engagement could yet be possible. This connects us to the ages old theme of flight as politics described by writers from Deleuze and Guattari (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 (1980)) to James Scott (Scott 2009): if one can't change a system or pursue one's values in it, it might be reasonable to pack up and move on. Or in other words, realizing one's connections, imagined and experience based, with other parts of the world and looking into options of relocation. Thus we see here how rotating around the notion of *karama* are a series of affects or sentiments building my research participants sense of location. The enthusiasm, feeling of being let down, hope, and passivity for their part forge a sense of location in Beirut connected to perceptions of the state.

# 5. Techniques of moving: the bureaucratic encounter

Having dealt with political movement, next we will move to movement as crossing borders. Or not exactly to the crossing of borders, but rather to the bureaucratic engagement involved in it, that is passports, visas and the consular process. In the first part I will look at passports and their affective dimension, and on the side provide some comments on the 'affective turn' in anthropology. In the second part I provide a narrative of engaging with the consular process and suggest that not only is paperwork affective, but also the work that goes into engaging the bureaucracies managing borders is co-constitutive of my research participants sense of location. In the last part I note that there indeed is a difference in this experience of bureaucracy amongst my research participants: even though their class-backgrounds are similar, some cross borders more lightly than others.

## 5.1 Passports and affect

Let me begin this discussion on passports with a quote from Michel:

> You know, the whole thing, I really find it unfair. You know, I have the Australian passport, but I can be more of a danger to the society than one of my friends who has the Lebanese passport. You know I find this really racist and I really think that the government should really rethink the whole thing and not make nationality the reason, like visa shouldn't be for nationalities. But it's very complicated with everything I don't think it's going to change anytime soon. What is good is there are more and more people who are aware of that, people who dream of a world without borders, which is really good, which I really go for, I really support.

Although Michel's commitment to a world without borders was not shared by all my research participants, his comment here points at something at the center of this discussion. That is, he says that he has the Australian passport, but feels its really racist and unfair[35]. So his personal

[35]Michel's guilt has interesting contrast with Bridget Anderson's claim that migration controls are but a point in a national moral discourse aimed at a nations citizens, to construct a notion of 'good citizen' (Anderson 2013).

position in the complex field of travel restrictions and border regimes allows him some privileges that he does not feel comfortable with, that collide with his vision of how travel ought to be. As noted in chapters before, Michel does enjoy the relatively easy travel afforded by his passport, but he reckons that his position and relation to places such as Europe and Lebanon is not unique amongst his peers in Lebanon, and thus his privilege makes him question the justification of the passport and visa regimes he has been navigating at large.

There has been a budding discussion amongst anthropologists in the Mediterranean on documentation and affect. In her by-now-classic article on travel documents in Northern Cyprus, Yael Navaro-Yashin proposes for us to *"study documents, or the material objects of law and governance, as capable of carrying, containing, or inciting affective energies when transacted or put to use in specific webs of social relation."* (Navaro-Yashin 2007 p.81) Here she is following the general trend amongst social sciences and certain strains of philosophy on turning to study of affect and nonhuman actors in the 2000's, notably the 'affective turn'. Since some might be alerted by a shift from discussions of value and stereotypes to affect, and exclaim here that doesn't the 'affective turn' propose an ontological gap between affect and intentionality or affect and society, it might help to clear things up a bit. So next I will make a short detour to the discussions around affect.

Obviously when talking of affect we look back at Spinoza's *"By affect I understand affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections"*(Spinoza 1994).[36] In some ways Deleuze's scholarship transmitted this understanding from the 17th century to current social science (Deleuze [1970] 1988). However in terms of the 'affective turn', we cannot understate the importance of Brian Massumi, translator of Deleuze and Guattari's Thousand Plateaus (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 (1980)), and his book *Parables of Virtual* (Massumi 2002). As Massumi explains, even though affect is often loosely used as a synonym for emotion, affect and emotion *"follow different logics and pertain to different orders"*(Massumi 2002 p.27). Thus, Massumi confirms the 'irreducibly bodily and autonomous nature of affect' and explicates on

For Michel migration control is likewise a moral issue, but is he really the subject of a national discourse on good citizenship? Of Australia?

[36]Note that the concept of body at play here is wide; it could be seen as including non-human and non-living bodies.

the difference between emotion and affect:

> Emotion is qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning. It's intensity owned and recognized. … If some have the impression that affect has waned, it is because the affect is unqualified. (Massumi 2002 p.28)

So for Massumi, affect is something that exists prior to the semiotic and semantic, before the narrative. But Massumi also turns to the psychological to back up his theory (Massumi 2002 p.29). This, among other deficiencies in the social sciences 'affective turn' have attracted critique. In her article *Potentiality of Ethnography and the Limits of Affect Theory* anthropologist Emily Martin (Martin 2013) leverages a powerful critique of the antihumanist tendencies of affect theory, that is, against the notion that affect is pre-personal and pre-social. She focuses her critique particularly on the biological and neuroscientific underpinnings of Massumi (Martin 2013 p.155). Her critique is convincing, at least I would say it is well pointed at Massumi. However, it is telling that in her critique she does not return to Spinoza at all, nor does she really do to Deleuze.[37]

The alliance of affect theory with neuroscience is by no means the only possible route to take, as exemplified among countless examples by Susan Ruddick in her article *The Politics of Affect* (Ruddick 2010). So, as Ruddick notes *"Each era has produced its own inflected readings of Spinoza. The emphasis on the connection between joy and empowerment - the argument that we organize encounters to maximize joy - has become a cornerstone in many contemporary approaches to the constitution of a new political subject,"* (Ruddick 2010 p.22) Thus as she (in my mind, rightly) claims by looking at politics of Deleuze and Negri, a lot of the interest around affect theory in social science has not been around the individual encountering the affect in a psychological experiment (as in Massumi) but rather as a cornerstone in the constitution of a new political subject. That is, even if we read Deleuze as insisting on an ontological gap between affect and emotion, affect nonetheless is for him as well as Negri a thoroughly political, that is social, business.

[37] After all Deleuze is not, I would suggest (and some might not agree), a Kantian philosopher: he is interrogating being in itself, not how mind relates to the world. I consider that Deleuze and Spinoza could both be argued to write classical (pre-Kantian) metaphysics, or speculative philosophy.

It is also of note that Navaro Yashin (Navaro-Yashin 2007 p.97 note 14) traces her understanding of affect to Teresa Brennan and her book *Transmission of Affect* (Brennan 2004) and to the Actor Network Theory (e.g. Latour 1993), rather than to Massumi, and it is of consequence that also Brennan's widely cited book is missing from Martin's critical treatment. Without going too deep into the issue, let me note that Brennan leans more on a tradition of psychoanalysis in contrast to Massumi's neuroscientific argument (Brennan 2004 p.12) and that she does not suggest an ontological gap between affect and emotion (Brennan 2004 pp.5-6).[38]

It is my own understanding that, factoring in the critique, paying note to affect in research has immense benefits. To discuss affect does not necessitate relying on the neuroscientific argument of Massumi, and for my own purposes it is not necessary to solve the question of the ontological gap between affect and emotion. It should suffice to say that affect and emotion are not identical, and that they work on different principles. For humans affect is always-already a social matter, for a humans capacity to affect and be affected exists in relations with others. What is of prime importance for my conception of sense of location is that affect works with bodies. Thus it points at a sensibility or sense of location that is not merely emotional, but also bodily.

So after making clear my stance with regards the 'affective turn', let me return to Beirut with Navaro-Yashin and Michel. As is probably clear by now, the affective route proposed by her does carry explanatory significance in our case. For when Michel feels anxiety at the privileges afforded to him by his passport, is this not essentially a situation where the document takes up a position in 'specific webs of social relation' and incites affective energies that Michel interprets as anxiety about his privilege? This is not to claim that the passport Michel has in his possession makes him do anything, but rather as Navaro-Yashin continues:

> My argument, then, is not that documents maintain autonomous or self-contained

[38] Personally, I find the most useful stance on this issue to be found in Sarah Ahmed's *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*: "*Certainly, the experience of having' an emotion may be distinct from sensations and impressions, which may burn the skin before any conscious moment of recognition. But this model creates a distinction between conscious recognition and 'direct feeling', which itself negates how that which is not consciously experienced may itself be mediated by past experiences. I am suggesting here that even seemingly direct responses actually evoke past histories, and that this process bypasses consciousness, through bodily memories. Sensations may not be about conscious recognition or naming, but this does not require that they are 'direct' in the sense of immediate.*" (Ahmed 2004 p.40 note 4). I consider this to be reconcilable with Navaro-Yashin, even though she does not cite Ahmed.

> affectivities, but that they are perceived or experienced as affectively charged phenomena when produced and transacted in specific contexts of social relation. Documents, then, are phantasmatic objects with affective energies which are experienced as real. (Navaro-Yashin 2007 p.81)

Without going too far into the discussion on the nature of travel documents and official paperwork, we can note that how Michel (and my other research participants) see themselves located in relation to Europe and Lebanon is in part mediated by the kind of travel documents they carry. And it should be clear that this is affective business quite thoroughly; actually the way travel documents work here diminish or increase the body's power of acting in a dual sense. Not only do travel documents afford or limit movement, but they also *"take the shape of or transform into affect and become part of their handlers"* (Navaro-Yashin 2007 p.95), and thus summon up emotion, such as Michel's anxiety.

So let me return to my research participants with a snippet of discussion on a lazy Saturday afternoon at a trendy Mar Mikhael bar with Tony and friends:

> Tony: We can never travel when we want. There's always like procedures…
> Joseph: haha, I'm Brazilian, I can do it, my grandmother is Brazilian.
> Tony: So you get really frustrated, like you are living in a society, but your mentality, I believe I was raised on a different mentality. So you find you're stuck here, and you can't travel. Innu[39] I deserve a visa I think because my mentality is not like the Lebanese, so I get titled as Lebanese Arab, so I have to deal with it, while deep inside I'm not. I'm the least patriotic person on earth. I just wanna leave.
> Joseph: I think that's a problem that a lot of people face here.

Tony is expressing the only-Lebanese-passport side of the discussion that was rehearsed by different people on a regular basis. Joseph provides the contrast, jokingly taking up the same position that Michel complained about in the discussion above; although in this discussion Joseph does not make an explicit critique of the hierarchy of travel between them, the joking mode where he

[39] *Innu* is Lebanese Arabic expression approximately equivalent to English "so", that my research participants regularly used to punctuate their English.

presents his comment hints at certain uneasiness. Then Tony continues to claim he is essentially entrapped. Of note is how he follows Michel's (and many others) casual rebuttals of nationalism and how he provides a conceptualization of "different mentalities" to be found in his country, but rather more interesting for our purposes here is the unfairness he decries following Michel. So, *"I just wanna leave"* and *"you get really frustrated"*, thus feeling restricted to a place on grounds that feel unfair and not according to one's own understanding of being positioned in the world.

This feeling of entrapment has been taken up before by Stef Jansen in an article influenced by the proposal of Navaro-Yashin's discussed above. In his text called *After the Red Passport* (Jansen 2009) Jansen looks at the changing visa regimes of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia. To summarize, before the disintegration of Yugoslavia, its passport used to be amongst the best passports in the world, affording travel equally to the Capitalist West and Communist East, but after the fall the new emerging passport regimes afforded neither. Jansen says that this resulted in a sense of entrapment, which he proceeds to examine based on Navaro-Yashin's ideas (Jansen 2009 p.816).

Although, the understandings of affect in Navaro-Yashin and Jansen are quite different. While Navaro-Yashin takes the 'affective turn' inspired position that affect has to do with interaction of objects and persons (Navaro-Yashin 2007 p.81), Jansen has a critical perspective[40] of the affective turn. For Jansen, an 'affective encounter' is a situation where a social structure elicits emotion (Jansen 2009 p.817), not a situation where objects (such as paperwork) carry or incite affective energies. In my own analysis I utilize conceptual tools from both writers, but on the theoretical/analytical question of what affect is I lean more towards Navaro-Yashin's perspective and sympathize with the 'affective turn'. This means that even though I discuss emotions such as 'sense of entrapment', I maintain that the question is not (only) of a structural condition eliciting emotion. Rather it is relations and interaction between persons and objects in particular structural conditions that elicit affect, and this affective interaction is experienced as emotion. Importantly, affect is not (only) emotional, but rather, a bodily issue.

There are a number of parallels between the situation of my research participants and those of Jansen's. Firstly, as Jansen frames his primary point of inquiry: *"in increasingly standardized*

[40] Jansen actually criticizes Navaro-Yashin's ethnography for not providing the material to back up her theoretical perspective. (Jansen 2009 p.816)

*global mobility regimes, which forms of affect emerge at the point where individual and collective experiences of the consular process intersect?"* (Jansen 2009 p.816), we can see that the question carries immediate relevance to mine. For what is at hand with the chat around passports and visas in Lebanon, is exactly at the intersection of individual experiences (thus, my research participants experiences of travel and relevant bureaucracy) and collective experiences (thus, the discussions of passports and relevant social hierarchies spoken in Beirut) where 'affect emerges' and for its part forges my research participants sense of relative location.

Secondly, even though the Lebanese passport never enjoyed the same possibilities of border crossing that the Yugoslav 'Red Passport' did, there is an element of comparison at work in both cases. Where Jansen's informants compare their problems with crossing borders to those they enjoyed before the reconfiguration of the visa regimes or those of their parents, my research participants engage in comparison with their peers who hold non-Lebanese passports that make travel available. In both cases the end result is anxiety and a feeling of *"humiliating entrapment"*(Jansen 2009 p.818).

Thirdly, as Jansen points, *"Visa regimes were thus not simply experienced as a practical obstacle for individuals wishing to travel. Rather, engagement with mobility regulation was embedded in the ongoing production of collective hierarchies."* (Jansen 2009 p.821) This production of collective hierarchies was felt by my research participants in their immediate social surroundings. For example my research participants Pierre exclaimed that with his Venezuelan passport, *"I don't need visas, I need visa for the States, England, Canada, and China. But besides it… It's an amazing passport, all my friends are like, I wanna marry you".* So in Beirut the emergent hierarchies are often confronted by joking, as with Pierre's friends claiming they want to marry him. In any case the comparison and what was felt amongst my research participants as unjust hierarchies in terms of travel were an important node for 'emerging of affect' and configuration of their feeling of relative location.

Last but not least, with a term called 'everyday geopolitical discourse' Jansen is actually engaging in a intellectual project parallel to mine. To quote him again, *"Affective engagements with the documents of mobility regulation were often embedded in an 'everyday geopolitical discourse', by which I mean a routine, non-official mode of representation of one's collective place in the contemporary world."* (Jansen 2009 p.824) So when he aims at a 'mode of representation of

one's collective place in the contemporary world', the direction is the same (although the route different) as when I'm looking to see how my research participants utilize both their experiences and the stereotypes to build up a sense of their own location. To note on the difference, when Jansen treats 'everyday geopolitical discourse' as a representation of one's place, I rather look at the stereotypes and experiences utilized by my research participants (including an 'everyday geopolitical discourse') as tools for forging a sense of one's place in the world.

So to gather up the discussion above, I'll just quote Hassan shortly: *"The majority of people in Lebanon, they want to leave so bad, but they can't do anything with the Lebanese passport."*. Thus the anxiety and feeling entrapped, affected by travel documents set in these particular social relations and the bureaucratic regime at the back of the documentation. A passion of sadness in the proper Spinozian sense, decrease of one's power of acting (Deleuze [1970] 1988 p.71).

## 5.2 Engaging the consular bureaucracy

So it's settled that crossing borders is an affective issue and has a lot to do with engaging with bureaucracies. In this subchapter I move from passports to the visa regime and engaging with it. If in the previous subchapter the focus was on the passport as an affective object, here the focus is on the bureaucratic engagement and the tactics of negotiating it. I will begin with a longish narrative from Ghassan, holder of only the Lebanese passport, about his business of getting a visa for an internship in France.

> Well, they wouldn't give me a visa to work. That's mainly why the people at the company refused to give me an internship, because then they would have to like produce paperwork and stuff so that I can come there. So I just applied for a tourist visa, that I'm traveling, I lied. I made a fake ticket. Is anyone gonna listen to this, besides you? [laughter] So I just lied on the application, I made like a hotel reservation, because I know that the tourist visa is the easiest to get. So I made like a fake hotel booking and a fake trip, hoping that they wont check it. I didn't think they will check it because they have like a million applications. So I had to produce like a million documents, and it's good, luckily I was still a student then. So, it was good

> because I can just get, instead of like you have to have a certain income and stuff, they have many requirements, but if you are a students its less complicated. You just bring a paper that you are registered for this year. So it removes the income stuff. And I had to have my parents bank account, and stuff like, so many papers. Then I had to plan it like way ahead. And then I got it, I was surprised, I was not sure if I will get it. Because I never had one, it's really hard to get. I was worried that it wouldn't work. And also because it takes a lot of time. I plan ahead but I don't plan that much ahead. So until the company told me OK you can come by your own means, and we don't pay you but we will give you a paper that you work for us.

Let me provide some comments here halfway through the narrative. Ghassan provides us insights into how even a middle-class way of crossing borders requires complex forms of knowledge on the workings of the European visa regimes and skills to navigate it creatively. The relation he has here to the border regime is contradictory in a sense: on the one hand he has to lie in his visa application in order to cross the border from Lebanon to France, but on the other hand this white lie is OK for all sides of the negotiation. As Ghassan induces, it's not exactly a top priority for the European border regime to stop him from coming to France for his internship even though he is not able to do it according to the rules set by the legislation. Also, he utilizes what privileges are afforded to him, such as his student status in a French language university in Beirut that allows him to clear some of the necessary procedures.

Still, according to his words he does need to produce *"like a million documents"* in order to work through the visa procedure. There are a number of things in the visa procedures that act in analogy with what was discussed in the chapter above on how carrying different passports makes subtle hierarchies emerge amongst people who would be otherwise peers in terms of class or social status. So when Ghassan says he's unsure if he will actually get a visa since he didn't have one before, but notes how his student status eases things up, he taps into discussions where things such as previous travel, educational background, religious background and economic background are seen as affecting one's chances in negotiating the European visa regimes. But on with Ghassan's story.

> So then I started thinking about the visa, and that was when already in three months

> I was going there. And that was like still maybe not enough. I had to first get the appointment, you have to wait like 25 days to get the appointment. I checked online, and I booked it, and then I got the documents and stuff, that took a bit of time. And then I presented the papers. Then they will give you a result, they send you a message, after usually a minimum of 20 days. So the whole thing takes, you have to plan around 50 days ahead. So I was worried.Also because I had to book the plane, because I can't book the plane the same minute I get the visa, because it is super expensive, and there was one week left and they didn't send me a message. So like days, six, five, four, three, two. Then it was like the Friday and I was traveling on Saturday, and it was like Friday, and khalas[41], if they don't give it on Friday it will drag until Monday. And in the Friday morning I got a message and gasped my breath, and ran to the office because they close at 1:00 pm or something, it was really ridiculous. So they send you a message which says just come get your result, they don't say if you won, if you got it or not. And then I went there, I had to go to a room, they give you a closed envelope, you go out of the room and I was like flipping the pages and then I was like "yayy!!", I got it, I was so happy, I was so happy. It was so good, I was so happy. And then I went home, had to pack and stuff and called my friend, telling him I'm coming khalas I got it, and he was like perfect. So that was the story.

Here Ghassan traces his story through feelings of uncertainty and suspension, until the narrative climax where at the last minute he gets summoned to the French consulate. When he finally gets his hands on the envelope he describes a strong feeling of joy at having "beaten" the visa-regime and secured his entry to France. As discussed in the chapter above, we see how paperwork is affective. The visa-envelope Ghassan discussed here is not only an item where both the French consular and the visa applicant invest their work and thus charge up its importance, but rather as noted above with Navaro-Yashin it's 'a phantasmatic object with affective energies which are experienced as real' (Navaro-Yashin 2007 p.81). It is not only emotion brought about by structural conditions, but an affective interplay between Ghassan and the paperwork set in a certain

[41] *Khalas* is a Lebanese Arabic expression with a wide range of uses and meanings, roughly equivalent to English "enough" or "done with it". My participants regularly used it in amongst their English.

structural situation. The affective encounter incites joy in Ghassan and affords him a new capability for travel by changing the social dynamic between him and Europe's border regime. And we should note the vacillating nature of Ghassan's affective engagement with the visa envelope, experienced as emotions: from suspension and fear through the application process, then relief as the plot thickens and he is summoned to the consular office, tension at uncertainty of the final result and finally joy flipping through contents of the envelope and unearthing the positive visa decision.

To return for a moment to the way the visa encounter works equally on stereotypes and thus forges subtle hierarchies amongst my research participants, let me quote here Sarah's speculation on her own engagement with the visa regime.

> I think I was kind of lucky because I never had any problems, never ever had any problems. Even for this one, when I got the four years, if its separately, I didn't ask for four years, I asked for two months. I think when they see that you travel quite a lot, and you just respect the dates, and they are kind of flexible. And you are honest, you did not stay longer or. Or maybe for instance, I think, maybe, I don't know if its true but it can be true, maybe because of the religion, or where you come from, or where you did your studies, I don't know if its related but. I'm not sure, I can say maybe, I can just suppose.

Thus we see how she picks up the same themes, conditionally, that Ghassan referred to in helping one navigate the border regime. These are previous histories of travel, religion, residential background and current or previous student status. Obviously she expresses uncertainty in whether these are actually true, but as we saw with Ghassan, student status was amongst the things he utilized to smooth his process of negotiating the visa. So even if this knowledge is conditional and uncertain, it still is an essential form of knowledge that my research participants summon to work their way through the European (and other) border regimes whatever their background. It is interesting here how a form of knowledge that is of importance also in navigating the Lebanese society and especially its political system and the affiliated regime of *wasta* become extrapolated to the workings of the European border regime, and obviously how the border regime in fact does

utilize stereotyping in a similar way.[42]

Thus information on people's backgrounds in terms of class, religion, education and residential history is important not only in terms of Lebanese society and political processes, but also in terms of crossing the border from Lebanon to beyond. And in a way this is not only extrapolation of a form of knowledge, since it actually works. As we saw above, Ghassan was able to cross the border partly because he knew how to utilize the important features of his background (student status, etc.). The same is equally true of Sarah, she not only "won" a visa for two months but rather for four years, a victory she infers to be related to her background. Thus what we have here is not only a epistemological extrapolation, but also a form of knowledge that actually works.

Why then is all of this relevant for my overall argument? Aside from providing an ethnographic snippet of the relevant work for crossing borders, it is also of interest how the bureaucratic engagement, the "like a million documents" required for a person holding a Lebanese passport to get a visa, work to create the feeling of entrapment discussed in the above subchapter. So, the work my research participants engage in to cross borders forms an important aspect of the experiences they utilize to gather a sense of their relative location. Thus, to understand my research participants sense of location, their connections and disconnections to different places, it is not only relevant to understand their experiences and stereotypes of specific locations, but also to understand the work it takes to move between these locations. To relocate or disconnect takes work, and this work changes one's sensibilities. Although in contrast to how a lot of the literature on borders emphasizes crossing borders as a transformative experience, in the next subchapter I will move to twist my argument and present how in some ways crossing borders was for my research participants (on a variable scale, obviously) also something of a non issue.

## 5.3 Crossing borders as a non-issue

In the previous subchapter we looked at ways that engaging with borders, or more precisely, the border bureaucracy, is a problematic and affective encounter for my research participants. This

[42] Actually there is not too much literature on this, possibly due to difficulties of access. One example is the work of Düvell and Jordan amongst British Immigration Service officers (Düvell and Jordan 2003). Although their case is outside the Schengen area, I think on a broad level it is generalizable to the importance of stereotypes in the praxis of border control.

however is not exhaustive. As suggested above, engaging with the border bureaucracies entails a formation of hierarchies of movement. So what's the other side of the story, when movement across borders is not a huge problem? I claim that there are two distinctive features at play here. On one hand, for those of my research participants who carried 'good' passports, borders really were not so much of a hassle.

On the other hand, even for those of my research participants who struggled with the visa regimes, crossing borders did not necessarily entail strong shifts in other senses. What I am implying is then, that for my research participants physical travel does not necessarily imply conceptual, social or cultural shifts. This has been put so nicely by Ghassan Hage, commenting on Jonathan Parry (Parry 2003):

> as [he] noted in his analysis of internal rural Indian immigrants: 'long distance migration is not only a matter of miles. Most migrants are conscious of having also traveled a long way in attitudes, outlook and style of life'. But there are many people who move across international borders but do not experience this kind of 'travel in attitude' that Parry mentions. Indeed there are many people who do not experience their international movement either as a form of cultural dislocation or as migration. (Hage 2005 p.469)

I will return to the second conception with Hage in the next chapter, but for now let me return to my research participants to explicate crossing borders as a non-issue in the first sense. So let me quote a short exchange between me and Pierre, holder of the Venezuelan passport as noted above.

> me: The US, it will be easy for you to go there because you have the scholarship?
> Pierre: Yeah, I had my visa appointment yesterday. I'm supposed to get my passport back on Monday
> me: Thats quite fast.
> Pierre: Yeah, just takes a couple, like three working days. So I guess I'm all set to go. Just need to pack up and bounce.

Pierre's words here work well to show the contrast to Ghassan's strong narrative of his struggle with the passport. Just a couple days, just pack up and bounce. There is a notable lack of affect at play here. Although structurally the process is similar to Ghassan's: Pierre also worked through the visa procedures, went to the consulate for visa appointment, waited for the process to get his passport back. However, we see none of the anxiety, none of the suspense, none of the joy. The visa process for Pierre is simply business as usual. In some way the everydayness of border crossing and engagement with bureaucracy makes the case of Pierre and other holders of non-Lebanese passports less ethnographically interesting, since as storytellers we tend to be on the lookout for drama and tension. However, when I consider how affective encounter with border bureaucracies shapes my research participants sense of location, it emerges that here a lack of affect is equally important as an encounter filled with tension and stress.

So there is no feeling of entrapment here, one is not barred from moving. While for Jansen's informants the comparison to a less problematic travel was temporal and spatial, thus to past selves and neighboring nations (Jansen 2009), for my research participants there is rather a social comparison between immediate peers. So to compare with the narratives of Ghassan or Tony, Pierre's experience is the other side of the coin. Another of my research participants, Layla, put this comparison quite explicitly: *"Passport is really helping me with travel compared to other people who really, they have problems to do their visa and travel."* I think it's important to bring this up to provide the full picture, since the comparison works both ways. Not only is the feeling of entrapment constituted for its part by the ease of bureaucratic engagement for some, but also the other way around a feeling of ease of travel is constituted by the problems encountered in the visa procedure by others.

Peter Redfield has claimed that in our times of globalization *"One of the starkest divides falls between people who travel easily and people who do not. At the most literal level, those equipped with funds and the right documents pass lightly over borders, whereas the poor and undocumented incite security concerns."* (Redfield 2012) Somehow, even though hailing from relatively similar class backgrounds, my research participants fall differently in relation to this divide: while some clearly pass lightly over borders, others, lacking the funds and the right documents struggle for their mobility. Then again, Redfield's "stark divide" is muddled up with my middle-class research participants, since even those who struggle to cross the borders are not undocumented

and poor, in the sense intended by him. Nonetheless, it has emerged that in terms of bureaucratic maneuvering, they do not pass lightly over the borders.

Before moving on let me gather together the argument presented in this chapter. In the first part I compared anthropological literature on affect in paperwork and bureaucracy to my research participants experiences. I noted that passports become parts of their users in ways that work to create collective hierarchies. I noted that for those left with a 'bad' passport, that is the Lebanese one, there is a ensuing feeling of entrapment and for those with 'better' passports an anxiety at their privilege. I noted, following the literature inspired by Spinoza, that this is a thoroughly affective business, whereby my research participants powers of acting related to their sense of location are impacted. In the second part I provided more ethnographic depth by examining a narrative of Ghassan's engagement with the French consular based on the presented ideas.

In the last part I noted that there is the another side to this coin. Thus the feeling of entrapment for some of my research participants is constituted in part by active comparison with the unproblematic border crossings of others, and vice versa. So entrapment is in no way a social totality but rather a relatively random condition in regard to my research participants. Finally, all of this has an obvious impact on the sense of location for my research participants. In the next chapter we will turn to anthropological discussions of cosmopolitanism and see where my research participants stand in relation to it. Related is the notion presented in the beginning of this subchapter, that even if a border crossing is bureaucratically troublesome, it does not necessarily imply conceptual, social or cultural shifts. And I would like to suggest further, that neither does it necessarily imply any shifts related to identity.

# 6. Cosmopolitanism and Beirut

In this final data-chapter I will look at literature on cosmopolitanism and present an understanding of how it relates to my field and research participants. In the first subchapter I give some examples from the general discussions on cosmopolitanism that have lately been a central point of interest to sociology and anthropology of globalisation. I will also look at some regional discussions, especially on how cosmopolitanism has been applied to urban studies in the unrivaled metropolis of Arab world, Cairo. In the second subchapter I move on to see how cosmopolitanism has been discussed in Beirut, both in the work of visiting urbanist scholars and local intellectuals. I provide descriptions of how cosmopolitanism has been in emic use as part of political discussions in the city, and look back to my research participants to discuss how they have related to the acclaimed cosmopolitanism of Beirut. In the final chapter I return to the general argument of this thesis, and suggest how my perspective and the concept of cosmopolitanism can be utilized together to deepen an understanding of location and cross-border movement.

## 6.1 Cosmopolitanism in social sciences

> As a central concept of the eighteenth-century French philosophes, 'cosmopolitanism' is derived from 'kosmo-polites', a composite of the Greek words for 'world' and 'citizen', by way of the 'esprit cosmopolite' of Renaissance humanism. It primarily designates an intellectual ethic, a universal humanism that transcends regional particularism. (Cheah 1998)

Overlapping with the anthropological and general social scientific interest in globalization, transnationalism, and so on, the concept of cosmopolitanism has spurred an immense amount of literature since the 1990's. In this subchapter I will present some examples from this discussion on a general and regional level to lay a basis for understanding cosmopolitanism in Beirut. Since in this thesis I'm focusing on the concept of relative location, I'll try to restrict my treatment to perspectives that could provide insight on the spatial dimension of cosmopolitanism. This means I will not be focusing on some issues that could be understood to be at the core of cosmopolitanism, such as solidarity, cultural encounter, or self-reflection.

One of the strongest features of the discussion around cosmopolitanism is the haziness, confusion, and disagreement on how the concept should be used and understood. Divisions such as philosophical/analytical, rooted/detached and subaltern/elite populate the discussion and there is significant vacillation between different understanding even within single texts or edited volumes. In fact, it seems to have been something of a trend in the early 2000's sociology to write articles with the sole aim of clarifying what should be meant by the term cosmopolitanism. In what follows I will shortly present some examples of this discussion.

To begin with, as in Pheng Cheah's quote presented above, the concept of cosmopolitanism is often traced back to the Stoics, French enlightenment philosophers, and if not to them, then to Immanuel Kant writing in the 19th century (eg. Shryock 2008 pp.411-412). However, some scholars, inspired by the traditions of postcolonial and feminist scholarship, have proposed a move against the understanding of cosmopolitanism as a concept entangled primarily with Western historiography. One such proposal can be found in the introduction to a special issue on cosmopolitanism of the journal *Public Culture*, where the authors instead suggest a move away from Kant's 'World Citizenship', to look for minoritarian cosmopolitanisms:

> The cosmopolitanism of our times does not spring from the capitalized 'virtues' of Rationality, Universality, and Progress; nor is it embodied in the myth of the nation writ large in the figure of the citizen of the world. Cosmopolitans today are often the victims of modernity, failed by capitalism's upward mobility, and bereft of those comforts and customs of national belonging. (Pollock et al. 2000 p.582)

The authors suggest being 'archivally cosmopolitan', simply looking at the world across time and space beyond the actual use and etymology of the term 'cosmopolitanism', to see and understand how people have acted beyond the local. What they end up with is the suggestion that 'we already are and have always been cosmopolitan', and that cosmopolitanism is 'infinite ways of being.' (Pollock et al. 2000 pp.585-586)

The suggestion of Pollock et al. is in important ways followed by Ulrich Beck, who suggests an understanding of cosmopolitanism that moves beyond the contrasting nationalism with cosmopolitanism, and differentiates between normative or political 'cosmopolitanism' and 'actually

existing cosmopolitanism' (Beck 2004 p.133). She proposes to look for 'banal cosmopolitanism' that occurs beneath the surfaces and facades of national spaces and sovereignties, as the 'cosmopolitanization of reality' that is not intentional, and can even be a side-effect of unconscious decisions (Beck 2004 p.134).

Meanwhile, Victor Roudometof has suggested separating between a cosmopolitanism detached from national/local belonging and 'rooted cosmopolitanism' as proposed by Beck and Pollock et al. above, and defends the analytical importance of a universalising and thin cosmopolitanism for understanding our world (Roudometof 2005). Then again, not everyone has been satisfied by these realignemnts of cosmopolitanism: for example Meyda Yeğenoğlu takes a critical look at the different proposed understandings of cosmopolitanism and proposes that perhaps we shouldn't be so quick to dismiss nationalism and the national framework, for their importance to articulating a politics of subaltern especially in the third world countries (Yeğenoğlu 2005).

As a final example, Gerard Delanty argues that cosmopolitanism should be understood as working on three different levels or dimensions, *"the historical level of modernity, the macro or societal level of the interaction of societies or societal systems, and the micro level of identities, movements and communities within the social world."* (Delanty 2006 p.41). He continues that most importantly cosmopolitanism should be understood as residing in social mechanism and dynamics, and thus it can exist in any society at any point of history, but it should be noted that our age of globalization has made cosmopolitanism more relevant today than it was before (Delanty 2006 p.44).

Such a short description obviously does not constitute an adequate representation of the voluminous literature on cosmopolitanism, but I hope these examples serve to give some context. How then, can my research material from Beirut be viewed through the concept of cosmopolitanism? Before moving on to Beirut, let me first turn to some studies on cosmopolitanism in Cairo and the Middle-East.

Something of a classic in this field is Sami Zubaida's contribution to the 2002 volume *Concieving cosmopolitanism* (Vertovec and Cohen 2002). In his piece Zubaida traces Middle Eastern cosmopolitanism from the Abbasid courts through al-Andalus to the late Ottoman elites, and notes that today cosmopolitanism "*in the old fashioned sense of communally deracinated and culturally promiscuous groups and mileux, continues to exist in particular corners of urban space.*"

but continues that cosmopolitanism in the current Middle East is facing dire straits because of the 'recently urbanized masses' and 'forces of international capital' (Zubaida 2002 p.41). This nostalgic-elite perspective on cosmopolitanism is completed by Zubaida ending his article by noting that *"It is not surprising, therefore, that the main cultural flourishing of Middle Eastern cosmopolitanism now occurs in London and Paris."*(Zubaida 2002 p.41).

Zubaida's definition of Middle Eastern cosmopolitanism as pertaining to the 'communally deracinated and culturally promiscuous' elites or elite milieux is by no means the only perspective scholars have had on the subject. For example the self-proclaimed Cairo School of Urban Studies launches their treatment of cosmopolitanism in Cairo with an attack on such reactionary notions:

> we recognize that cosmopolitanism has often been imbedded in transnationalist, normative, universalist, and imperialist discourses. Nevertheless, when reworked through critical scholarship and public action, cosmpolitanism may inform an emancipatory counter-ethic beyond the limits of nationalism, fear, and narrow identity politics… (Amar 2006 p.4)

Positioning itself in the tradition of scholarship of 'subaltern', 'vernacular' and 'critical' cosmopolitanism, the Cairo School note that "*cosmpolitanism may inform an emancipatory counter-ethic beyond the limits of nationalism, fear, and narrow identity politics*" (Amar 2006 p.4). So according to them, a non-elite cosmoplitanism is alive and well in the Middle-East, or as they put it in a longish paragraph worth quoting:

> the case is alive for more vernacular, less elitist, non-Eurocentric cosmopolitanisms in the Middle East. Cosmopolitan discourse is no longer limited to the circles of liberal elites spinning utopian Mediterranean heritage narratives, or to bastions of neo-colonial millionaires justifying five-star contractor projects and consumer marketing schemes. Of course, these forms of exclusive, cruel cosmopolitanism are stronger than ever. But also new forms of cosmopolitanism in the Middle-East are crawling back to the margins of the public sphere in the shape of subversive, grounded, fierce, world-weary articulations. (Amar 2006 p.33)

Somewhat to the contrary of Cairo School's subaltern[43] (or, anti-elite) manifesto, Mark Peterson studies in his book *Connected in Cairo* the actually-existing elite cosmopolitanism (Peterson 2011). Peterson suggests the term 'cosmopolitan class' to denote those citizens of Cairo who can build by means of consumerism an urban and modern style (Peterson 2011 pp.2-3). For Peterson, cosmopolitanism centrally involves "*the capacity to manage the coexistence and juxtaposition of different cultures and to make this capacity part of one's identity.*" (Peterson 2011 p.11) For Peterson, the justification for restricting his treatment of cosmopolitanism to the consumerist elites is that it actually is the way that most Egyptians would understand the term 'cosmopolitan'. Or as Peterson puts it himself, the important things to identify cosmopolitanism in respect to his study involve issues of style (or habitus): *"their Western educations, their easy movement across transnational borders, their consumption of transnational goods, and the general display of tastes in music, literature, film, clothing, and technologies that distinguishes them from the masses."* (Peterson 2011 p.23)

On a final note, as Will Hanley has beautifully demonstrated (Hanley 2008), the scholarly pursuit of studying cosmopolitanism faces some significant dilemmas and obstacles in Egypt and the Middle-East. Quite unable to shake the nostalgic cosmopolitanism of an imperial past, such as in Zubaida, and incapable of formulating a consistent research project for subaltern cosmopolitanism, such as in *Cairo Cosmopolitan*, is the study of cosmopolitanism in Middle East bound to be forced to stick with study of an elite class aiming for a symbolic affinity with the West, such as in Peterson? Is cosmopolitanism in the Middle East anything more than wealth and secularism, in the extreme case signaled by the consumption of alcohol (as in Zubaida's treatment) (Hanley 2008 p.1350)? Next we will turn to cosmopolitanism in Beirut, and try to work through some of these questions.

## 6.2 Beirut as a cosmopolitan city

> Beirut was a cosmopolitan city, but the war was truly a native rebellion. In the Muslim-dominated area where we lived, the French-style patisseries were blown up

[43] Although, note Will Hanley's scathing critique of the volume, where he claims and expounds that the volume's actual contents fall short of the grandiose emancipatory political agenda suggested in the introduction cited by me (Hanley 2008).

> early on. Not that the Lebanese Muslims preferred the Arab sweets *baqlawa* and *knafeh* or had no taste for French delicacies, but the war, at least in its initial stage, took on an antibourgeois bent and French sweets were associated with that stratum of society. (Khuri 2007 pp.139-140)

In this subchapter I will shortly look at how Beirut has been described as a cosmopolitan city in history and today, and relate some scholarly writing on the subject to my research participants perspectives. Writing of the onset of the Lebanese civil war in the 1970's, the Lebanese anthropologist Fuad Khuri catches immediately on to the theme of nostalgia for a lost cosmopolitan past, and the equation of cosmopolitanism with a bourgeois taste for western-style consumer goods. Anthropologist Henk Driessen has actually claimed that the nostalgic longing for a lost cosmopolitan past is a feature common to all Mediterranean port cities once part of Ottoman or Habsburg empires (Driessen 2005). Beiruti nostalgia for a lost cosmopolitanism is temporally mainly directed to the French mandate period and the early years of independence preceding the civil war. As Driessen notes: "*This cosmopolitanism in the interstitial towns was largely the result of the confrontation of Western European capitalism, colonialism and imperialism with the disintegrating Habsburg and Ottoman empires.*" (Driessen 2005 pp.138-139)

The great Lebanese sociologist Samir Khalaf has continued in his work with a similar understanding of the cosmopolitan. In his book *Heart of Beirut* he notes on the features that made and continue to make Beirut a cosmopolitan place :

> Beirut's ebullient cosmopolitanism was not only reinforced by its Levantine mercantilism and tolerance for foreign incursions. By virtue of its location, composition and its historic role as a hybrid place of refuge for dissidents or a gateway for itinerant groups, Beirut has always been a fairly open and free space. (Khalaf 2006 p.233)

For Khalaf, focusing in his book on the history and reconstruction of Beirut's central business district[44], this historical core of the mercantile city once was and now again is the core of Beirut's

[44]The Central Business District (CBD) is known with multiple names, amongst them the Down Town and the *Bourj*. It comprises roughly of the current day areas of Martyr's Square (*sahat as-shuhada*), Nijme Square, Riadh al-Solh Square and the Beirut Souks.

cosmopolitanism. For Khalaf, *"Despite its chequered history, the Bourj, more than its adjoining quarters and eventual outlying suburban districts, has always served as a vibrant and cosmopolitan 'melting pot' of diverse groups and socio-cultural transformations."* (Khalaf 2006 p.169) The downtown of Beirut, the commercial and administrative hub of the city before the outbreak of the civil strife, was almost completely destroyed during the hostilities. Until today, despite intense reconstruction, traces of the war abound on edges of the district. I will return to the downtown reconstruction process shortly, but first let it suffice to say that for Khalaf, a current day Beiruti cosmopolitanism is something akin to that of Zubaida's described earlier, although not lost in the tides of history, but worth reconstructing in today.

One of the more powerful recent treatments of Beiruti cosmopolitanism comes from a study of Steven Seidman based on his fieldwork in the district of Hamra close to downtown Beirut (Seidman 2012). In his article, Seidman follows some of the above definitions of cosmopolitanism, but underscores the importance of its emic use.

> cosmopolitanism is rightly understood not only as an analytical or normative category, but also a collective representation. The latter underscores its role as a social force with real-life consequences; for example, cosmopolitanism may be promoted as a state or entrepreneurial strategy of branding and tourism, or as a class ideology. (Seidman 2012 p.5)

Notions of cosmopolitanism as a class ideology are reminiscent for example of Peterson's treatment of the cosmopolitan class in Cairo discussed above (Peterson 2011), but more central here is Seidman's pointing out that cosmopolitanism as a collective representation is a real social force with real consequences. Seidman correctly points out cosmopolitanism's political weight in Beirut, in claiming that *"the discourse of cosmopolitanism is enmeshed in ongoing struggles over national identity. Specifically, cosmopolitanism is enlisted to defend a liberal nationalist project against both Arab nationalists and sectarian loyalists."* (Seidman 2012 p.6)[45]

[45]The struggle over Lebanese identity has been a constant feature ever since it's founding. The Lebanese constitution affirms that Lebanon is a sovereign country and Arab in it's identity and affiliation. This has been understood as historical compromise between Arab nationalist Sunni Muslims and Lebanese nationalist Christians (e.g. Firro 2003, 207–10).

For Seidman, contary to Khalaf, it is Beirut's Hamra district that serves as the core of cosmopolitanism in Beirut (e.g. Seidman 2012 p.7-8). This might have to do with the fact that he carried out his own field research in Hamra, but according to my own experience it is not a detached perspective either. I will return to this question in a bit with my research participants, but for now it suffices to note that while downtown is often imagined as the upper class consumerist core of Beirut, Hamra serves for many as the cultural hub. The neighborhood famously survived the worst ravages of war, has a large expat population supplementing an upper-class Sunni Muslim majority, and has the two most highly prized institutions of Lebanese higher education (AUB and LAU) flanking the district.

As noted above, at the core of Seidman's understanding of Beiruti emic use of cosmopolitanism is a project of liberal nationalism facing both Arab nationalists and groups with sectarian political agendas. Seidman notes that the rhetoric of cosmopolitan nationalism assumes Lebanon a position as an exceptional Arab nation, "*a contrast between the 'modernity' of Lebanon (forward-looking, individualistic, pluralistic, and global) and Arab 'traditionalism' (backward-looking, communitarian, intolerant, and provincial).*" (Seidman 2012 p.25) According to Seidman, this divide is not only between Lebanon and other Arab nations[46], but also inside Lebanon. In Seidman's words: *"Specific social spaces, institutions, figures, and movements are said to signify Lebanon's modernity and cosmopolitanism while other spaces, institutions, figures, and movements symbolize Arab traditionalism and provincialism."* (Seidman 2012 p.25) Obviously we can see that in this picture Hamra (and for some, the downtown) are signifiers of modernity, while other neighbourhoods, such as the Shi'a majority lower class suburb Dahiye or for that matter the upscale Christian majority district of Ashrafieh do not qualify as cosmopolitan.

Before moving on to describe the reconstruction process of downtown Beirut and my informants takes on comsopolitanism in the city, I'll shortly describe another symbolically significant area of Beirut: the Shi'a majority southern suburbs, or Dahiye, as they are known in the city. Unlike the neighourhoods so far discussed, the downtown and Hamra, Dahiyeh is generally represented as more lower class and more religious than other areas of Beirut. In international journalism Dahiyeh is often desribed as a "stronghold" or "bastion" of the Shi'a political-military movement

[46]Then, in Lebanon there is a strong current especially amongst Maronite Christians, that claims Lebanon is not an Arab nation to begin with, and trace its identity to ancient Phoenicia. On the history of 'Phoenicianism' in Lebanon, see for example *Reviving Phoenicia* by Asher Kaufman (Kaufman 2004).

Hezbollah due to the popular support it enjoys in the area, making it sound as if the residential neighborhoods were a military camp.[47] Anthropologists Lara Deeb and Mona Harb have gone to great length in their ethnographic study of the southern suburb to challenge enduring stereotypes of the area and it's Muslim youth, and to provide a more complex and nuanced representation (Deeb 2006; Deeb and Harb 2013). Yet it is important to note that stereotypes of Dahiyeh abound not only in Western media or scholarship, but also in the minds of residents of other areas of Beirut. So for example Craig Larkin's informants:

> The majority of students I interviewed held these implicit derogatory assumptions. For Hala, a third-year Greek Orthodox AUB student originally from the coastal city of Byblos, the district represents another world, a paradox existence only to be negotiated through separation, denial, and the redrawing of spatial boundaries: "Al-Dahiyya is very foreign. I don't know where I am going, I don't know the people. . . It is not even part of Beirut, its part of a different district, the Jabal (the Mountain—Jabal Amal)." (Larkin 2010 p.433)

But let me turn back to the downtown. Actually, let me quote Larkin again for a brief overview of the reconstruction of central Beirut, initiated after the end of the Lebanese civil war by the private-public company Solidere under auspices of the Lebanese state and founded (and partially owned) by the late prime minister Rafik Hariri:

> Solidere's 30-year "Master plan" (1994–2024) incorporates 472 acres: a third of which is reclaimed land, 175 acres that are allocated for new developments, such as a marina, hotels, and global commerce, and only 54 acres (including 265 key structures) of which are part of Beirut's original urban fabric. This partially completed project envisions a global, tourist friendly, cosmopolitan Beirut, which draws on the Lebanese traditions of commerce, pluralism, and innovation.

Solidere's reconstruction of Beirut's down town has brought to surface fault lines and differences in opinion even among the circles in Beirut that might describe themselves or their neighbourhoods as cosmopolitan. On the one hand, we can remember for example Samir Khalaf's

[47] There is a lot of good journalism also criticizing the Western media's conduct. For one example, see (Fernandez 2015).

favourable disposition towards the project, and note how for example how Caroline Nagel describes the project at the hearth of the Solidere, of convincing the Lebanese of a certain cosmopolitan nature of their city:

> The Solidere-state partnership addresses the Lebanese people not as Muslim, Christian, or Druze, but as part of a more ancient 'race' of people, whose character has been shaped by Lebanon's position as an entrepot between East and West. The regime, in other words, is trying to convince not only corporations and investors of Lebanon's innate entrepreneurial spirit, but also the Lebanese people themselves. (Nagel 2000 p.226)

On the other hand, Solidere has received immense criticism for building an exclusive area not accessible to the people of the city. For example, we could cite one of Larkin's informants, Yassir, a university student from the Palestinian camp of Bourj al-Brajneh

> They are rebuilding a fake Lebanon. . .it's like Disneyland. Down Town is fake in many ways. First the building style is not Lebanese, of course it's reconstructed but in a way that is very European (I haven't been to Europe, but my European friends told me that) and the term Disneyland was given by a French friend of mine, not me. . . .They built it on top of ruins and how can a Lebanese working man afford a cup of coffee there. . . .People going there are acting fake. (Larkin 2010 p.430)

Before moving on to the next subchapter, let me turn shortly to my own research participants and see how they saw the different areas of their cosmopolitan city. On Dahiyyeh, my informants comments were surprisingly consistent. None of them were residents of the area, yet none of them described a outright negative attitude towards it. Most emphasized that they have friends or peers from the area, yet all agreed that they rarely ever visit it or spend any amount of time there. The reasons given were twofold, first they claimed that there is nothing to do in Dahiyyeh for people not from the neighborhood; no bars, no shopping malls, no places to hang out.[48] Second,

[48] Although it was *not* brought up by my research participants, especially many of Beirut's expatriates noted that Hezbollah security personnel paying attention to everyone not from Dahiyyeh made some parts of the neighborhood not pleasant to traverse.

they acknowledged somewhat regretfully that they felt insecure visiting the neighborhood, mostly attributing it to the occasional bombings by Sunni fanatics targeting civilians of the area. Quite representative of my participants were Michel's words: *"I feel a bit insecure when going to Dahiyeh. And honestly, there isn't much to do there. For me it's a shame, to have Beirut still divided until now."*

Hamra, for the lot of my research participants, was generally viewed in positive terms, yet not as the neighborhood where most of them preferred to spend their time. Rather, for the majority of my informants their preferred neighborhood was the trendy yet not too fancy nightlife district of Mar Mikhael. As Tony commented, while we were chatting at his favourite bar during a Saturday afternoon in Mar Mikhael and I asked him for his take: *"Hamra, its just far. Three years ago Hamra boomed."*. The fact that Mar Mikhael was a preferred area probably reflected the fact that majority of my informants hailed from Christian backgrounds (Mar Mikhael being located in the Christian majority district of Ashrafieh), but more importantly, also the fact that during my research Mar Mikhael was the trendy nightlife spot of the city.[49]

Finally, turning discussion to the downtown and Solidere's reconstruction project almost consistently evoked surprisingly militant responses from my research participants. As Clara reminisced of a time before the reconstruction went on full swing: *"We used to go demonstrate, before Solidere put concrete over the old tombs of Beirut. We sat there on the street and they threatened to put concrete over us. Unfortunately we really didn't succeed. But at least we tried."* Other participants, such as Rana, presented their relation to downtown as detachment rather than political engagement: *"I don't really go there, I don't really like to go there, I feel it's fake, I don't like it a lot."*

Critiques towards Solidere from my participants consisted generally of pointing out how Solidere does not respect the architechtural and archeological heritage of the area under reconstruction, and thus ends replacing the Heart of Beirut (to quote Khalaf) with fake, posh, consumerist upscale shopping malls and aparment complexes that are not accessible or enjoyable to the populace at

[49] The circulation of nightlife hot-spots around Beirut inspired a lot of narrations amongst my research participants. A generalized narrative would go approximately like this: Before the civil war, Hamra was the unchallenged leader. After the war, in the late nineties Rue Monot in Ashrafieh gained a special position. After Rue Monot's moment in fame the action moved to Hamra and Gemmayze. Finally, since the last couple years, Mar Mikhael was the up-and-coming star leaving others in its wake.

large. The notion that Gulf money (as noted before, associated in stereotype with a lack of values other than money itself) was behind the reconstruction was brought up consistently. Michel compressed well how a lot of the things my participants despised or disliked in their city were consolidated in the rebuilding of the cosmpolitan downtown:

> For me Solidere is like a virus spreading across Lebanon, it's like cancer. And I really find it funny how, the government don't care. Since Solidere is rich they are giving money to the government, so they don't care. So it's like having a cancer patient, but the doctor doesn't want to treat it. I know its a bit extreme, but I'd rather stand with the extreme Muslims than with Solidere.

It is interesting to note there is some overlapping between how my research participants describe the different neighborhoods of Beirut and how they describe Gulf, Europe and Lebanon as described in the chapters above. Thus, the downtown and Solidere is associated directly with the Gulf, money, capitalism and a lack of positive values.[50] The association here is both direct and analogous. However, for example in the case of Mar Mikhael, participants described that what they enjoyed about the neighborhood (analogous to Seidmans informants in Hamra) was its vibrant cultural life, general atmosphere, and nightlife. There is, then, an obvious analogy here to how my informants described their experiences of different places in Europe. Obviously the analogies are not strict and don't hold all the way, rather what I think is of note is that the 'social poetics' of relating to places and making sense of once relative location in the city works in a similar way between countries.

So to gather up the discussion a bit, it could be claimed that while the Beirut downtown reconstruction works as a cosmopolitan nationalist project working to inspire in the Lebanese a certain understanding of their location in the world, the project has faced a lot of resistance as well since its inception. However this resistance is not necessarily framed in anti-cosmopolitan vocabualry, but embodies perhaps an alternative understanding (or political hope) of Beirut's relative location. I think it is better to understand the militant responses mine and Larkin's research participants

[50]Obviously, this is not mere association. Since Solidere's founder late PM Rafik Harir spent time enough in Saudi-Arabia to gain the Saudi citizenship, many people not sympathetic to his policies viewed him as Saudi rather than Lebanese. (e.g. Larkin 2010 pp.418-420)

provided when questioned of the significance of Solidere's reconstruction project. The resistance to Solidere is perhaps not a 'truly native rebellion', as Fuad Khuri described the blowing up of French patisseries at the beginning of this subchapter, but it does have a certain anti-bourgeois tone. However, instead of taking on the symbols of French colonialism, it takes aim at the Gulf financial capital and, in words of my participant Hassan, *"the ugly towers and stuff... and malls and luxurious apartments."*.

## 6.3 Cosmopolitans in Beirut

In this last part, let me take a look at what the discussion around cosmopolitanism offers for understanding my informants sense of location and relative location. But first, let me shortly recollect my overall argument. I suggested that in order to understand how my informants come to a sense of their relative location, we need to look at different processes, including values and stereotypes functioning as a social poetics. I suggested that understanding stereotypes of places as examples of values, and thus as ways of organizing one's experiences and understanding of one's location in the world, provides a window to how a sense of location is formed.

I also looked at political protest and state, and also at border bureaucracies, and how such concrete encounters and engagements work as a part of the social poiesis. My intention has been that all of these discussions help us understand how my research participants form an understanding of their location, as currently physically based in Beirut, but maintaining connections to different corners of the world in terms of experience and imagination.

Now, they live in a city that both on the official and popular levels often describes itself as cosmopolitan. They also, as has been demonstrated, maintain complex connections and disconnections to different places around the world, organized as a sense of their location through a process I have called social poetics. So are my research participants cosmopolitans? What analytical weight could the discussions around cosmopolitanism offer in our case? As was demonstrated in the subchapter above, my participants take a critical stance towards the 'official' cosmopolitan nationalism symbolized by the downtown reconstruction, and as discussed before, show a reluctance even towards working for a more critical cosmopolitan nationalism.

Somehow, my research participants do not really fit in to the description of elite cosmopolitanism

visible for example in Zubaida's or Peterson's work (Zubaida 2002; Peterson 2011) since in terms of class they mostly would not qualify as elite. Doubtless social strata and groupings that would fit this description could also be found in Beirut. I would also find it difficult to describe my participants as cultivating a 'western' consumerist style such as noted by Peterson. On many occasions my participants would articulate criticism of people who spend their last coins in Starbucks or such only to make a show of 'western' lifestyle. However, I must acknowledge that in terms of style, they definitely dressed, spoke, and enjoyed culture in a way that would separate them from people of the more popular areas of Beirut, or other cities in Lebanon (such as Tripoli), in a way that sometimes explicitly set them apart from "the Arab Middle-East" as a stereotype of style.

Besides style, I think there is something else worth noting on my participants and cosmopolitanism. So, as promised in chapter 5.3, I will return to movement with Ghassan Hage. Perhaps the reader will remember that Hage claimed that there are many people in the world who do not experience cross-border travel either as migration or as cultural dislocation (Hage 2005 p.469). He explains the argument further by suggesting that not all movement is sensed as significant, and that in order to sense that one's movement is significant, it has to involve a sense of being uprooted from things that one is familiar with and a sense of being out of place (Hage 2005 p.470). Let me illustrate this with a quote where Hage describes his own history:

> I personally left Lebanon to study in Australia without ever thinking of myself as 'migrating'. I saw myself as simply studying in Australia. Then I just stayed there, never really thinking of myself as having migrated. So, is migration a subjective or objective definition of movement? In a somewhat different way, the Lebanese merchants and bankers I have talked to in my research never use the concept of migration. They say I am 'living' in New York, I am living in Paris, or, 'where were you living during the war?'. (Hage 2005 p.470)

So, as Hage continues, for many of us, when crossing international boundaries, the change from one national culture to another might not be the most significant aspect of the move. Rather, he suggests, what is important is a sense of 'existential movement', of progress in one's life (Hage

2005 p.470). I think this concept could provide us a better way of understanding why people choose to travel, and also how they experience dislocation. As Hage continues:

> Migrants and would-be migrants, like everyone else in the world, like to feel that 'they are going places', and they prefer to be 'going places' by staying where they are in environments with which they are familiar. It is only when they are 'going nowhere' or 'too slowly' in such familiar environments when they start thinking of physical mobility. (Hage 2005 p.470)

I would like to suggest that Hage's terms fit quite well to my research participants. Their reasons for crossing international borders were indeed framed in terms of 'going places', in pursuit of some of the values I described in chapter 3. And when they moved, as visible from the way they spoke of past or future travel, they didn't necessarily experience uprootedness or a sense of being out of place. Rather they based their movement on evaluating their location based on how it helped them progress with their lives. Thus, their sense of relative location comes to bear an immense importance, since as Hage claims, many would prefer to be 'going places' by staying put. Thus, a sense of distance served as the main focus when my informants chose where to travel.

For example, for my francophone research participants, Paris was in a lot of ways closer to them than Doha. Further, I would claim that according to the sense of location for most of my participants, Paris was in some ways definitely closer than Tripoli in Northern Lebanon. Yet, my informants were not Lebanese bankers or merchants, and crossing international borders was not always without a hassle for them. For example Ghassan felt that Paris was not so far away for him in terms of culture or language, and he could evaluate it as a place for pursuing his values. However the border bureaucracies standing between him and travel did their part to change his sense of location, thus evoking the feeling of entrapment.

I would like to claim that in this sense the literature on cosmopolitanism can provide grounds for understanding my research participants situation. In this case, cosmopolitanism wouldn't only imply an emic political category as suggested in the previous subchapter, but also an understanding of relative location of places. Here, then, in the classical sense of cosmopolitanism we see a

diminishing of national categories at the expense of other connections between places. Yet my research participants could hardly be seen as part of a cosmopolitan elite, and I think understanding this affords us a way between the subaltern cosmopolitanism of a migrant uprooted from the familiar and his sense of being out of place, and the 'small worlds of cosmopolitanism' of the global commercial elite (Friedman 2004 p.189).

So, let me reiterate: my research participants are cosmopolitan not because they follow the global capitalist route of moving at high speed around a homogenized urban mercantile world, where spatial distance does not imply a great distance in terms of relative location. Nor are they cosmopolitan since they take the proper migrant route, throwing themselves out of their own cultural context and building transnational community networks on a more working-class level. Rather, it is a middle-class version meshing together elements from both: where movement and relocation does not always imply a great leap in terms of difference, where it does imply negotiating and navigating complex border regimes (sometimes with more ease, sometimes more difficulty) and furthermore where it does imply an active will to relocate according to a set of values anchored in Beirut lived reality and experiences of places beyond.

# 7. Conclusion

In the pages above I have examined the city of Beirut and some young adults inhabiting it from the perspective of their connections and disconnections to other places. I have intended this thesis as an examination of the possibilities offered by trying to understand how people organize their lives and futures through a sense of being located somewhere in particular in relation to other places. The streets of Beirut and the young middle class adults who helped me as my research participants have provided an extended case study for trying to work out this question, and at the same time to see how their own relative location in the world is construed by themselves and forces beyond themselves.

In the beginning of this thesis I presented my main research question, *"How do young middle class Beiruti adults form a sense of their relative location in the world?"*

The answer I have provided to this question in the pages above is only partial. Since the process of forming a sense of location is a complex one, with countless things interacting, it has not been possible to completely chart it during the research I have carried out. However, I have provided a number of perspectives that serve as a partial answer to the question. The two subsidiary questions that I presented were "How are stereotypes used in comparison of places by my research participants to form their sense of location?" and "What other processes are involved in locating my research participants?". I suggest that these questions are answered while providing the answer to my primary question.

My answer to the question is that there are many different processes and spheres whereby in research participants formed a sense of their relative location. These include comparison between different places through stereotyping, attaching to and de-attaching from one's current location, a possible feeling at home, and feelings of entrapment and ease of travel between different places. I suggest that partly this is a process of organizing knowledge to locate oneself, and partly a process of being located by regimes beyond one's own control.

I propose that the way my research participants compared different countries and locations can be understood as a part of forming a sense of their relative location. I examined how they compared Lebanon, the Persian Gulf countries, and Europe. I suggested that they attached certain attributes

to the different places in a way that should be understood as forming stereotypes. For example, my participants associated Lebanon with the notions of *fowda* and *wasta* (chaos and clientelism) and compared it with Europe, that they associated with *organization*. Such comparisons should be understood as a *social poetics* (Herzfeld 2005) wherein my participants compare places to form a sense of their own location in relation to different places.

In another part of the discussion I presented how my participants further used stereotypes and associated Lebanon with caring for their families, the Gulf countries with working for money, and Europe with art and personal autonomy. While these are simplifications also for my part, I suggested that the interesting thing about this comparison is that the stereotypes my participants formed of the places have values attached to them. Thus, for the comparison, Europe represented the value *culture* (art and free life), the Gulf represented *money* (lack of other values) and Lebanon represented *family*. I suggest that the ways stereotype, value, and comparison work in these examples are also part of what I call *social poetics*, and that through associating places with values it becomes possible to evaluate one's location in relation to different evaluated places. This, I propose, is one of the ways my research participants formed a sense of their relative location.

I also suggest that the way my participants discussed their attachment or lack of attachment to Beirut, and imagined their futures in Lebanon or beyond, inform us of how they come to a sense of their relative location. For example, the building of attachments to a place was construed as an active choice by my participants. I also propose that encounters with the state and bureaucracy form a an important experience that affects my participants sense of location, as seen already by the comparison between *chaos* and *organization* above. Through a case study of the social movements in Beirut that called for an end to sectarianism and for better governance, I suggest that the notion of *karama* (dignity), that served as a central node to all the Arab revolutions of year 2011, serves as an important node for my participants sense of attachment to their country. I suggest a dual movement of political engagement: that on one hand their engagement in a political movement gave them a glimmer of hope that strengthened their ties to Lebanon, but on the other hand the failure of affecting change led to a loss of commitment to the place. Based on the case study, I propose that political engagement can be understood as reorganizing my participants sense of relative location.

I propose that paperwork and engagement with the consular process are also part of the process of coming to a sense of one's location. I suggest that comparison by my research participants of their different passports worked to create social hierarchies between them in terms of movement. I propose that this created a feeling of ease of movement for some, and a feeling of entrapment for some. I suggested that passports and the border engagement should be understood as affective, in order to underline that coming to a sense of one's location is not only a conceptual or cognitive process, but also a bodily (and emotional) experience. The same process is visible in the engagement with the consular bureaucracy. Thus the necessary work of crossing borders was insignificant for some of my participants, but for others presented an intense emotional and affective engagement. I suggest that the experience with border bureaucracies in their different manifestations is yet another process that is at work recalibrating my research participants sense of relative location.

Finally, I propose that the discussion around the concept of 'cosmopolitanism' can help us better understand the condition of my research participants. While cosmopolitanism works also as an emic political category in Beirut, one that my participants engage with both critically and affirmingly, I propose that cosmopolitanism can also analytically help us diminish the importance of national categories and methodological nationalism. I suggested, following Ghassan Hage (Hage 2005), that when my participants crossed borders they did not necessarily consider themselves as migrants, but rather as people crossing borders to strive for their values and to further their goals in life. I consider this to be important in understanding how they form a sense of their relative location: it is important to look at connections between places and people in a complex whole where national borders are only one of many mechanisms at work.

My aim in this thesis was to work towards and understanding of Beirut and youth in today's Middle East. I argued that understanding it through the concept of relative location can give us a fresh perspective on the issue and help us see how people navigate their lives through different places based on a sense of their own relative location. Since my research participants shared different histories and different futures, their relative location in the terms proposed by me was obviously not singular. Therefore I hope that the discussion in this thesis can help us understand how people anchored in one place can still be differently located in relation to other places. As I suggested following Doreen Massey (Massey 2005), space (and location) are plural. It means

that there are multiple ways of configuring one's relative location even in Beirut, based on the connections and disconnections to different places beyond it.

This study is a contribution to the anthropological examination of Beirut, Lebanon, the Levant and the Mediterranean. I also hold that the perspective put forward in this work contributes to the growing literatures on anthropology of movement and transnationalism, discussed also under such names as globalization and cosmopolitanism. The discussion in this thesis, apart from providing a nuanced understanding of how some youth in today's Middle East see their own place and future in the world, also provides clues for moving analytically from everyday social action and a sense of location of individuals to the question of relative location of places. Studying the sense of location of a small group of persons could provide a schema for studying other types of social entities, and for tentatively understanding issues such as migration patterns or other forms of transborder (or trans-location) connectivity.

The perspective suggested in this thesis could be taken up in a more thorough way to provide for a better understanding of its applicability. The role of stereotypes and value in comparison of places, not only as demarcating group boundaries, but as organizing a sense of one's relative location, would definitely merit more study. On the level of community, the role of conflict between different senses of location has been largely bypassed in this thesis and could be taken up to be a focus of study. I also consider that even using the same theoretical perspective, it would have been profitable to focus the ethnographic eye on certain even more closely delimited places, instead of focusing on discussion and comparison by certain research participants. And although the research aim of studying the youth of the Arab world was not at the center of my writing, I would wholeheartedly endorse for using this perspective both in more elite youth and more subaltern youth groups to deepen the anthropological understanding of the role of Arab youth, both in terms of the regions future and enduring patterns of migration and diaspora connected to the region.

In the introduction I noted that throughout history the shores of the Mediterranean have always been entangled together in a complex set of connections and disconnections. I noted how today the post-2011 Arab world is going through fast-changing and uncertain times, while the European Union keeps fortifying its borders and expanding its influence beyond them. Yet throughout these changes in the great game, people on shores of the sea continue living their lives and planning their

futures, and the connections and disconnections between people and places on different shores keep on existing and evolving. Since as we see by looking at both history and today, it remains clear that the lives of people inhabiting the shores will not be bound in by national borders or other such fortifications. I hope that this thesis has for its small part helped shed light on the life in one city facing the Mediterranean, and the lives of certain people residing in it. And even if all of the youth discussed in this text would not join my research participant Michel in 'dreaming of a world without borders', my final suggestion is that they do indeed 'dream without borders'. Their futures, imaginations, and pasts are located not only along national borders, but along any number of experiences, memories, (dis)connections and dreams.

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